

## **Grange Park Junior School**

### **Internet Access Policy**

The National Curriculum expects pupils to learn how to locate, retrieve and exchange information using ICT. In everyday lessons teachers need to plan for and make use of communications technology, for example, web-based resources and e-mail. Access to life-long learning and employment, increasingly requires computer and communications use and pupils need to develop life skills in their use.

Home and social Internet use is expanding and it is becoming an important part of learning and communication during leisure time. This brings pupils into contact with a wider range of information, the scope and nature of which may or may not be appropriate for the pupil.

Why write an Internet Access Policy?

The Internet is managed by a worldwide, non-statutory collaboration of independent agencies that serve mainly an adult audience. Without appropriate measures, access to unsuitable materials would be possible and security compromised. An Internet Access Policy will help to ensure that Internet use supports schools' educational aims, that responsibilities to pupils are met and that local authority requirements are satisfied. In addition, the DfES requires that a school's ICT development plan for NGfL must set out their policy to protect pupils from access to undesirable materials.

Although teachers will have heard about the inappropriate aspects of the Internet, few will have had opportunities to discuss the issues in detail. The writing of the policy provides such an opportunity and the agreed policy produced is more likely to be implemented effectively.

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### **Who wrote the policy?**

Grange Park Junior School's Internet Access Policy is part of the school's ICT Policy and ICT Development Plan and relates to other policies that are periodically reviewed in line with the School Improvement Plan. The Internet Access Policy has been written by the Curriculum Leader for ICT using the model produced by Kent County Council Highcliffe Primary School Leicester and will be reviewed on a yearly basis according to the timetable in the School Improvement Plan.

### **Why is Internet access important?**

The purpose of Internet access in school is to raise educational standards, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems.

Access to the Internet is a necessary tool for staff and students. It is an entitlement for students who must be taught to show a responsible and mature approach.

What are the benefits to the school?

The Government has set targets for ICT use in all schools through the NGfL initiative. A number of studies and government projects have indicated the benefits to be gained through the appropriate use of the Internet in education.

These benefits include:

- Access to world wide educational resources including museums and art galleries.
- Inclusion in government initiatives such as NGfL and the Virtual Teacher Centre.
- Information and cultural exchanges between students worldwide.
- Cultural, vocational, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home.
- Discussion with experts in many fields for pupils and staff.
- Staff professional development - access to educational materials and good curriculum practice.
- Communication with the advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues.
- Improved access to technical support including remote management of networks.
- Exchange of curriculum and administration data with the LEA and DfEE.

How will Internet use provide effective learning?

Teachers, parents and pupils need to develop good practice in using the Internet as a tool for teaching and learning. There is a fine balance between encouraging autonomous learning and maintaining adequate supervision. Systems to ensure Internet use is as safe as possible will enable increased use; the quality of that use becomes a critical factor.

- Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities. Access will be controlled using filtering software.
- Pupils will be given clear objectives for Internet use.
- Staff will select sites, which will support the learning outcomes planned for pupils' age and maturity.
- Pupils will be educated in taking responsibility for Internet access.

How will pupils be taught to assess Internet content?

Pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content in books due to selection by publisher and teacher. This level of control is not so straightforward with Internet-based materials. Therefore, ICT teaching should be widened to incorporate Internet content issues, for instance the value and credibility of Web materials in relationship to other media. The tendency to use the Web when better information may be obtained from books may need to be challenged.

- Pupils will be taught ways to validate information before accepting that it is necessarily accurate.
- Pupils will be taught to acknowledge the source of information, when using Internet material for their own use.
- Pupils will be made aware that the writer of an e-mail or the author of a Web page might not be the person claimed.
- Pupils will be encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

How will e-mail be managed?

E-mail is an essential means of communication within education. The government is encouraging the ownership of personal e-mail IDs for both teachers and pupils, but care needs to be taken to establish the implications for the school and for the pupils.

- Pupils need to use e-mail as part of the National Curriculum Orders.
- E-mail must only be used in school for educational purposes.
- In-coming e-mail will be regarded as public. Received e-mail may be examined and could, for example, be pinned to a notice board.
- Messages sent using the school domain name should be regarded in the same way as messages written on school headed paper.
- The forwarding of chain letters will be banned.

How will publishing on the Web be managed?

Many schools have created Web sites that inspire pupils to publish work to a high standard, for a very wide audience. A Web site can celebrate pupils' work, promote the school and publish resources for projects or homework. Ground rules are important to ensure that the Web site reflects the school's ethos and that information is accurate and well presented.

As Grange Park Junior School's web site can be accessed by anyone on the Internet, the security of staff and pupils must be considered carefully. Although common in newspaper reports, the publishing of pupils' names beside photographs that identify individuals may be considered inappropriate on Web pages.

Pupils will be made aware that the quality of their work published on the web needs to reflect the standard of work expected at Grange Park Junior School.

- All material must be the author's own work, or where permission to reproduce has been obtained, clearly marked with the copyright owner's name.
- The point of contact on the Web site should be the school address and telephone number. Home information or individual e-mail identities will not be published.
- Photographs will not identify individual pupils. Group shots or pictures taken over the shoulder will be used in preference to individual "passport" style images.
- Full names will not be used anywhere on the Web site, particularly alongside photographs.
- Written permission from parents will be sought, in the form of the Internet Permission Form, to allow the school to use photographs of their children on the website and also to allow pupils to use the Internet.

What other Internet applications are available?

The Internet is the underlying technology, i.e. the wires and switches. New applications are being developed to use this ability to communicate, including conferencing applications such as Chat, Newsgroups and Webcams. Many of these facilities have great potential for education, for instance pupils could exchange live text, speech or video with a similar class in South Africa or Italy, at low cost.

- Pupils will not be allowed to access public chatrooms.
- Newsgroups are only available to staff.
- New facilities will be thoroughly tested before pupils are given access.

How will Internet access be authorised?

Grange Park Junior School will allocate access to the Internet on the basis of educational need.

- Internet access is a necessary part of the statutory curriculum. It is an entitlement for pupils based on responsible use.
- Internet access will be granted to a whole class as part of the scheme of work, after a suitable education in responsible Internet use.
- Parents will be informed that pupils will be provided with supervised Internet access.
- Parents will be asked to sign and return a permission form.
- A record will be maintained of all staff and pupils with Internet access. Persons will be removed from the record when access is no longer required, or is withdrawn. The school may decide to record access permission on a whole-class basis.

How will the risks be assessed?

It is difficult to remove completely the risk that pupils might access unsuitable materials via the school system whatever safeguards are put in place.

- In common with other media such as magazines, books and video, some material available via the Internet is unsuitable for pupils. The school will supervise pupils and take all reasonable precautions to ensure that users access only appropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of information available via the Internet, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a terminal. Neither the school, nor Hillingdon Council can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.
- The use of computer systems without permission or for purposes not agreed by the school could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- Methods to identify, assess and minimise risks will be reviewed at the same time as the policy is reviewed.
- Staff, parents, governors and advisers will work to establish agreement that every reasonable measure is being taken.
- The Curriculum Leader for ICT will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively.

How will the school ensure Internet access is safe?

The Internet is a communications medium that is freely available to any person wishing to send e-mail or publish a Web site on almost any topic. Access to appropriate information is encouraged and Internet access must be safe for all members of the school community from youngest pupil to teacher and administrative officer. Pupils will generally need protected access to the Internet.

The technical strategies being developed to restrict access to inappropriate material fall into several overlapping types (sometimes all referred to as filtering):

- Blocking strategies remove access to a list of unsuitable sites or newsgroups. Maintenance of the blocking list is a major task, as new sites appear every day.
- A walled-garden or pass list provides access only to a list of approved sites. Inevitably this approach will restrict pupils' access to valid information.
- Filtering examines the content of Web pages or e-mail messages for unsuitable words. Filtering of Web searches attempts to block a current loophole.
- Rating systems give each Web page a rating for sexual, profane, violent or other unacceptable content. Web browsers can be set to reject these pages.

None of these systems can be completely effective.

- The system we will use is a blocking system operated by the Hillingdon Grid for Learning (HGfL).
- Pupils will be informed that Internet use will be supervised and monitored.
- The school will work in partnership with parents; the LEA, DfES and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved.

- Teachers will ensure that occasional checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are effective in practice.
- If staff or pupils discover unsuitable sites, the web address and content will be reported to the Internet Service Provider via the Curriculum Leader for ICT.
- Any material that the school suspect is illegal will be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation.

How will the security of school ICT systems be maintained?

The Internet is a relatively new connection to the outside world that could compromise system performance or threaten security.

- Security strategies will be discussed with the LEA.
- The security of the whole system will be reviewed with regard to threats to security from Internet access.
- Personal data sent over the Internet will be encrypted or otherwise secured.
- Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly.

How will complaints regarding Internet use be handled?

Prompt action will be required if a complaint is made. The facts of the case will need to be established, for instance whether the issue has arisen through Internet use inside or outside school. Transgressions of the rules could include minor as well as potentially serious breaches. A range of sanctions would be required which will be linked to the school's behaviour policy. Responsibility for handling incidents will be given to the Curriculum Leader for ICT. A pupil may have e-mail, Internet or computer access denied for a period of time depending on the nature of the incident.

How will staff and pupils be consulted?

It is very important that staff feels prepared for Internet use and subscribe to the school Internet Access Policy. Staff will be given opportunities to discuss the issues and develop appropriate teaching strategies. It would be unreasonable if staff, particularly supply staff, were asked to take charge of an Internet activity without training.

- Rules for Internet access will be posted near computer systems. The Acceptable Use Statement or Rules for Responsible Internet Use will be printed as posters.
- All staff including teachers, supply staff, classroom assistants and support staff, will be provided with the Internet Access Policy, and its importance explained.
- Parents' attention will be drawn to the Policy in newsletters, the school prospectus and on the school Web site.
- As part of the ICT programme, children will be taught about the proper and safe use of the Internet.

How will parents' support be enlisted?

Internet use in pupils' homes is increasing rapidly, encouraged by offers of free software and access on magazine covers. Unless parents are aware of the dangers, pupils may have unrestricted access to the Internet. The school should help parents plan appropriate, supervised use of the Internet at home.

- A careful balance between informing and alarming parents will be maintained.
- Joint home/school guidelines on issues such as safe Internet use will be established.
- Suitable educational and leisure activities that make responsible use of the Internet will be developed with parents.
- A stock of relevant leaflets from organisations such as BECTA, PIN, and NCH Action for Children will be maintained.

#### Glossary of terms

BECTA British Educational and Communications Technology Agency - BECTA is the Government's lead agency for ICT in education. It supports the UK Government and national organisations in the use and development of ICT in education to raise standards, widen access, improve skills and encourage effective management.

ICT- Information and Communications Technology

ISP Internet Service Provider in our case we get Internet access through the Hillingdon Grid for Learning

HGfL The Hillingdon Grid for Learning <http://www.hillingdongrid.org>

NGfL The National Grid for Learning - the National Grid for Learning is the gateway to educational resources on the Internet. - <http://www.NGfL.gov.uk>

PIN The Parents Information Network Parents Information Network (PIN) is an independent service established in 1994 providing a wide range of guidance on computers and education for parents with children of toddler age through to 18. - <http://www.pin.org.uk>

URL Unique Resource Locator - the same as a web address

An example of letter to parents

Dear Parents,

### **Internet Access For Pupils**

In the very near future we will have Internet connection at our school through a very fast broadband link. This will mean that for the first time we will have the capacity to use the Internet with groups/classes of children. At the moment our connection is too slow for this to take place in an effective way. Our policy for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was written in January 1999, when our link to the Internet was through one telephone line and as a result of this, children and staff rarely had access to on-line materials. It is amazing how this situation has so radically changed in just three years! As a result of this change it is right and proper that our Internet Policy be reviewed; hence this letter to you. The fact that pupils and staff can access the Internet throughout the school day could be looked on as a threat, but I very much believe that it is an opportunity for children to enhance their learning, both in and out of school. Accompanying this letter is a copy of the rules for Responsible Internet Use and our Internet Access Policy.

Various projects have proven the educational benefits of Internet access, which will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards. Children will also be able to exchange messages with other learners and teachers throughout the world. Although there have been concerns about pupils having access to undesirable materials, we are taking positive steps to deal with this risk in school. Our school Internet provider - the Hillingdon Grid for Learning <http://www.hillingdongrid.org> - operates a filtering system that restricts access to inappropriate materials. This may not be the case at home and we can provide references to information on safe Internet access if you wish. Whilst every endeavour is made to ensure that suitable restrictions are placed on the ability of children to access inappropriate materials, the school cannot be held responsible for the nature or content of materials accessed through the Internet. The school will not be liable for any damages arising from your child's use of the Internet facilities.

We believe that the benefits to pupils from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. However, as with any other area, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

During school, teachers will guide students towards appropriate material. At home, families bear the same responsibility for guidance that they would exercise with any other information sources such as television, telephones, films and radio. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of Internet use, please feel free to contact me.

In summary I hope that you will support our Internet policy. I believe that we have safe, well filtered access at school, where children can use the Internet to enhance their learning. There are probably greater risks in using the Internet at home, than there are at school. Please would you read the attached rules for Responsible Internet Use, and sign and return the consent form to your child's classteacher on or before our Open Evenings on Monday and Wednesday 27th / 29th January. Please note the need for your child to sign the policy as well as yourself.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

**Grange Park Junior School**

**Responsible Internet Use**

Please complete, sign and return to your child's classteacher

***Pupil:***

***Class:***

**Pupil's Agreement**

I have read and understand the school rules on Responsible Internet Use. I will use the computer system and Internet in a responsible way and obey these rules at all times.

***Signed:***

***Date:***

**Parent's Consent for Internet Access**

I have read and understand the school rules for Responsible Internet Use and give permission for my son/daughter to access the Internet. I understand that the school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure pupils cannot access inappropriate materials. I understand that the school cannot be held responsible for the nature or content of materials accessed through the Internet. I agree that the school is not liable for any damages arising from use of the Internet facilities.

***Signed:***

***Date:***

***Please print name:***

**Parent's Consent for Web Publication of Work and Photographs**

I agree that, if selected, my son/daughter's work may be published on the school Web site. I also agree that photographs that include my son/daughter may be published subject to the school rules that photographs will not clearly identify individuals and that full names will not be used.

***Signed:***

***Date:***

## Grange Park Junior School

### Responsible Internet Use

We use the school computers and Internet connection for learning.  
These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- I will ask permission before entering any Web site, unless my teacher has already approved that site.
- I will not look at or delete other people's files.
- I will not bring floppy disks into school without permission.
- I will only e-mail people I know, or who my teacher has approved.
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible.
- When sending e-mail, I will not give my home address or phone number, or arrange to meet anyone.
- I will ask for permission before opening an e-mail or an e-mail attachment sent by someone I do not know.
- If I see anything I am unhappy with or I receive messages I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately.
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit.
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet or computers.

The school may exercise its right by electronic means to monitor the use of the school's computer systems, including the monitoring of web-sites, the interception of e-mail and the deletion of inappropriate materials in circumstances where it believes unauthorised use of the school's computer system is or may be taking place, or the system is or may be being used for criminal purposes or for storing text or imagery which is unauthorised or unlawful.