

POLICY DOCUMENT

INTERNET ACCESS at DOROTHY GOODMAN SCHOOL **(Staff and Students)**

INTRODUCTION

Dorothy Goodman School was connected to the Internet in 2000, and has full connectivity through EMBC on both sites.

The educational benefits of access to the Internet are now available to the school, but we are mindful too of the risks that exist because of the availability of unsuitable material. Our aim in developing this policy is to take full advantage of the learning opportunities that exist through the Internet, and at the same time to identify and manage the risks associated with it. This aim will be achieved through setting up procedures that are clear, and making those procedures known to and understood by all.

THE BENEFITS of INTERNET ACCESS

The purpose of Internet access in school is to raise educational standards, not only in ICT, but also across the curriculum. Amongst those benefits are the following:

- Access to world-wide educational resources – for pupils and for staff
- Access to information
- Innovative teaching techniques
- Communication and sharing of ideas between students and staff world-wide, including video-conferencing
- The facilitation of professional development
- Access to on-line discussion forums
- The development of ICT skills
- The capability to develop our own web site, in order to share information and practice with others

Internet use has become a part of everyday life, and it has come to facilitate many daily activities, from finding out information about leisure opportunities to shopping to booking holidays. From a Life Skills perspective it is right therefore that our students are taught how to access the Internet and how to use it for their benefit.

RISKS ASSOCIATED with USING the INTERNET

It is important to acknowledge that it is difficult, if not impossible to remove completely the risk of accessing undesirable material on the Internet. We use a secure, filtered system (Edex), but the continual development of new sites means that it is impossible to guarantee that undesirable material will not appear on the monitor screen. For this reason, we will seek to ensure that Internet access is always under the supervision of a member of staff; it is school policy not to allow pupils to use the Internet independently. The control measures that we have put into place are detailed in the next section.

Our Internet policy will be made known to parents, and parents will be informed of the risks and of the measures that we take to minimise them. Express written permission will need to be given by parents to enable their child to use the Internet in school.

HOW WILL the RISKS be MINIMISED?

1. Pupils using the Internet will be supervised at all times. Unsupervised access will not be permitted.
2. Internet access on both sites of the school has been purchased from an educational supplier, which provides a filtered service designed specifically for pupils. Whilst this cannot guarantee that undesirable material is not available, it ensures that the vast majority of unsuitable sites are blocked. If a site that is available is deemed to be unsuitable, it can be blocked by a member of staff.
3. Pupils will be educated in the responsible use of the Internet, and will be taught the educational benefits that it can bring.
4. E-Mail addresses used by students will never be private. They will always be subject to adult monitoring, and regular contact with unknown persons will not be allowed.
5. When pupils access the Internet they will have clear objectives for its use, appropriate to their level of understanding and their work. "Surfing the net" in an undirected way will not be encouraged.
6. Internet access within lessons will be planned to enrich and extend learning opportunities as an integrated aspect of the curriculum. Staff will check that sites selected for school use are appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils concerned.
7. Prior parental permission will always be sought for pupils to access the Internet.
7. 8. The school will work with the LA and the Internet provider to ensure that systems designed to protect pupils are continuously reviewed, improved and up-dated.

HOW WILL STAFF, PUPILS and PARENTS be KEPT INFORMED

- Rules for responsible Internet use will be posted near computer access points (see separate document at the end of this policy – Appendix 1). These rules detail what is considered to be acceptable use of the Internet.
- All staff will be provided with access to the Internet policy, and its importance will be pointed out to all.
- All new staff will be informed of the rules for responsible Internet use as part of their induction.
- All staff will complete a form before they are allowed to use the Internet for their own educational purposes in school (see Appendix 2).
- All parents will need to sign a form in order to give their written permission for their child to use the Internet in school (Appendix 3). If we do not receive this permission, then we will assume that parents do not wish their child to use it. Forms will be issued in the pack that is given to new parents.

CONCLUSION

The school is developing a partnership approach amongst all concerned – parents, pupils and staff. There are educational benefits to using the Internet, and these benefits will contribute towards the raising of standards. But equally the school is aware of the risks to young people. What we aim to do is to ensure that we can embrace the advantages fully, and at the same time minimise the risks.

If we work together, and if we make clear what is appropriate and responsible within the school environment, then we will achieve this aim.

Appendix 1

DOROTHY GOODMAN SCHOOL

RULES for RESPONSIBLE INTERNET USE

The school has installed computers with Internet access to help our learning and to contribute towards the raising of standards. These rules are designed to clarify what is permissible, and to ensure the safety of both staff and pupils.

- Before using the Internet, all staff shall sign a form to say that they will use the Internet responsibly. Only those people who have done so may use the Internet via school computers.
- The Internet is to be used solely for educational purposes – either to promote pupils’ learning or for professional development activity. It may not be used for personal convenience.
- Use of the Internet to access inappropriate material, e.g. material that is pornographic, racist or offensive, is expressly forbidden. Use for financial gain, gambling, political purposes or commercial advertising is forbidden.
- Access should only be made via the authorised account and password, which should not be made known to any other unauthorised person.
- CDs, DVDs or Memory Sticks shall not be brought in from outside school unless express permission has been given either by one of the ICT co-ordinators or by the Head Teacher. Activity which threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems (or any other) is not permitted
- Copyright of materials shall be respected.
- E-mails shall only be sent to people who are known to the sender; passwords shall be kept secret; messages should always be polite and responsible. Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters are not permitted.
- Home addresses and telephone numbers shall never be given out over the Internet, and arrangements shall not be made to meet any person introduced through Internet communication.
- Staff shall exercise appropriate control over the material that they send over the Internet and the sites that they access. They shall act as responsible “Internet Citizens”.

Appendix 2

Internet Use – Staff Access

I have read the school document:

**DOROTHY GOODMAN SCHOOL
RULES for RESPONSIBLE INTERNET USE**

I accept and agree to follow these rules.

I understand that the Internet Access policy has been drawn up to protect all parties, and I understand that the school reserves the right to examine or delete any files that may be held on its computer system, or to monitor any Internet sites visited.

I understand that I may not use the Internet unless I have signed a copy of this form.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Counter-signed (ICT co-ordinator or Head Teacher):

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Date:

Appendix 3

Letter to Parents: Internet Access

Dear Parent,

Dorothy Goodman is now linked to the Internet, and provides supervised access to the world-wide web. There are many advantages to this, including:

- Exchange of information with other schools
- Access to information from educational & research sites
- Access to material which will specifically help with their IEP targets
- E-mail facility, for example to make enquiries about local facilities

All use will be restricted solely to educational work.

There are of course concerns about unsuitable sites, and because of this the school has taken a number of steps to minimise, so far as is practicable, the risks of inappropriate images or text appearing on the screen, as follows:

- In all parts of the school we have purchased a filtering system through an educational company (Edex) and we use EMBC, which is the Government recommended provider
- Internet use is always supervised
- Anti-virus software is kept up-to-date

We hope that your child will be able to use the Internet under these circumstances, because it has become such an important tool in many everyday tasks. We need your written permission for this to happen through the form below. If you have any concerns or questions please ring me in school.

Thank you,

Tony Smith

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Child's Name:

I would / would not like my child to use the Internet

Signed: (Parent or Guardian)

