

Escomb Internet Policy

Article 17 – You have the right to get information that is important to your well-being, from radio, newspapers, books, computers and other sources. Adults should make sure that the information you are getting is not harmful, and help you find and understand the information you need.

The School's Internet Access Policy is part of the school's ICT policy and will relate to other policies.

The Internet Access Policy has been written by a team with a wide range of experience and will be reviewed on a yearly basis. It will be agreed by the senior management and approved by governors.

1. Why use the Internet in Schools?

- * The purpose of Internet access in schools is to raise educational standards, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's facilities and ability to serve the needs of pupils, staff and their community.
- * Access to the Internet is a necessary tool for staff and an entitlement for students who show a responsible and mature approach. It should be noted that misuse of a computer system will be dealt with through the school's disciplinary procedures and may result in the withdrawal of this facility in respect of the individual concerned.

2. The benefits to the school of internet use?

The Government has set targets for ICT use in all schools by 2002 through the National Grid for Learning 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 world-wide;
- Easier and better access to News and current events;
- Cultural, social and leisure use in libraries, clubs and at home;
- Access to 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;
- Exchange of curriculum and administration data with the LA and DfES;
- Support of staff through the National Lottery Funded Training Initiative by Internet, conferencing and e-mail.

3. Safe and controlled access to the Internet.

The school uses a 'filtered Internet Service' provided by Durham.net that stops as much of the unsuitable material as possible entering the school system or being displayed on a computer being used by pupils. It is virtually impossible to guarantee the removal of all such materials.

Pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content in books due to selection by publisher and teacher. The Internet is a new communications medium and is freely available to any person wishing to send e-mail or publish a Web site. Staff will need to ensure that access is appropriate to the user. Primary pupils will require protected access to the Internet. Teachers might need to research areas for example drugs, medical conditions, bullying or harassment.

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 particular types of material will never appear on a terminal. Neither the school nor Durham County Council can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.

- * Methods to quantify and minimise the risk will be reviewed;
- * Pupils, staff, parents and governors all have a contribution to make to ensure that unsuitable material does not appear on the schools system;
- * Staff will check that the sites selected for pupil use are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils;
- * Senior staff will monitor the effectiveness of Internet access strategies;
- * Access levels will be reviewed as pupils' Internet use expands and their ability to retrieve information develops (as filtering systems develop);
- * Senior staff will ensure that occasional checks are made on files to monitor compliance with the school's Internet Access Policy.

4. When will access to the Internet be allowed ?

- * The school will allocate access to the Internet on the basis of educational need. This will usually include all staff and all pupils and will include an e-mail address.
- * Internet access is a necessary part of planned lessons. It is an entitlement for pupils based on responsible use;
- * At Key Stage 1, access to the Internet will be by teacher or adult demonstration. Pupils will access teacherprepared materials, and specified areas of the open Internet;
- * At Key Stage 2, Internet access will be granted to a whole class as part of the scheme of work, after a suitable introduction to the rules for responsible Internet use;
- * Parents will be informed that pupils will be provided with supervised Internet access where it is important to their education and will be asked to signify if they are unhappy about their child's work appearing on the Internet;
- * A record will be maintained of all staff and pupils with Internet access. Staff and pupils will be removed from the record when access is no longer required. For supervised access pupils and

parents will be informed of the rules of responsible use operated in this school.

5. Protection of school system and user's files.

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

- * Virus protection will be installed and updated regularly;
 - * Personal floppy disks may not be brought into school without specific permission and a virus check;
- The IT co-ordinator / network manager will ensure that the system has the capacity to take increased traffic caused by Internet use;
- The security of the whole system will be reviewed with regard to threats to security from Internet access;
- Use of e-mail to send attachments will be limited to files created by pupils that have been virus checked and approved by a member of staff;
- Security strategies will be discussed with the LA, ISP and other appropriate agencies;
- All Internet traffic will be virus scanned automatically on receipt from the ISP.

6. Use of the Internet in the classroom.

Teachers and pupils need to learn how best to use this new tool for teaching and learning.

Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities as an integrated aspect of the curriculum;

Pupils will be given clear objectives for Internet use;

Pupils will be provided with lists of relevant and suitable Web sites;

Pupils will be educated in taking responsibility for Internet access;

Pupils will be informed that checks can be made on files held on the system;

Pupils using the Internet will be supervised appropriately;

Internet access will be purchased from a supplier that provides a service designed for pupils. This will include filtering appropriate to the age of pupils;

The school will work with the LA and the Internet Service Provider to ensure systems to protect pupils are reviewed and improved; Pupils will not send personal data over the internet unless specifically authorised by the school.

7. Reliability of Information from the Internet.

ICT teaching should be widened to incorporate Internet content issues, for instance the value and credibility of Web materials in relationship to other media.

Pupils will be taught to validate information before accepting it as true, an important aspect of higher levels of subject teaching; When copying materials from the Web, pupils will observe copyright;

Pupils will be made aware that the writer of an e-mail or the author of a Web page may not be the person claimed;

Pupils will be taught to expect a wider range of content, both in level and in audience, than is found in the school library or on TV;

Pupils will be encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

8. Electronic Mail.

Internet communication is moving from experimental to essential. Because of the simplicity and low cost of e-mail, care needs to be taken that the consequences to the school and the pupil of messages are appreciated. A major question is whether the responsibility for self-regulation should be delegated to individual pupils. Once available, it is difficult to control the content of e-mail without compromising privacy. email can be scanned by the ISP as part of the delivery process, but this tends to be for virus reasons only. Pupils need to be aware that the school reserves the right to check and monitor files on their work areas of the server and mail as it is sent and received if there is evidence to make this necessary.

Key Stage 2 pupils will be given individual e-mail accounts;

Communications with persons and organisations will be managed to ensure appropriate educational use and that the good name of

the school is maintained; The forwarding of chain letters will be banned; e-mail messages on school business must be approved before sending;
e-mail will only be sent or received as part of lessons, or during the email drop in club unless specifically authorised;
In-coming e-mail will be regarded as public.

9. The school Web site.

Schools create Internet Web sites that inspire pupils to publish work to a high standard, for a very wide audience. A Web site can celebrate good 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, that information is accurate and that pupils are protected. As the school's Web site can be accessed by anyone on the Internet, the security of staff and pupils must be maintained. Although common in newspaper reports, the publishing of pupils' names and photographs that identify individuals on Web pages is not considered inappropriate.

The headteacher and the ICT Coordinator have editorial responsibility to ensure that content is accurate and appropriate quality of presentation is maintained;

The Web site will comply with the school's guidelines for publications;

All material must be the author's own work, with credit given for other work included and state clearly the author's identity or status;

The point of contact on the Web site will be the school address, school email and telephone number. Home information or individual e-mail identities will not be published;

First names, only will be used when referring to pupils work or pictures on the web site;

Children will not be photographed in a way that enables them to be identified;

Pupils will be taught to publish for a wide range of audiences which might include governors, parents or young children.

10. Complaints procedure.

Prompt action will be required if a complaint is made. The facts of the case will need to be established. For instance it is possible that an issue has arisen through home Internet use or by contacts outside school. Transgressions of the rules by pupils could include minor as well as the potentially serious. The school's governing body complaints procedure will be used as appropriate. Sanctions for irresponsible use are linked to the school's disciplinary procedures.

Possible statements:

- Responsibility for handling incidents will be given to a senior member of staff;

- Pupils and parents will be informed of the procedure;

- A pupil may have Internet or computer access denied for a period;

 - Denial of access could include all school work held on the system;

- Parents and pupils will need to work in partnership with staff to resolve any issue;

 - As with drugs issues, there may be occasions when the police must be contacted. Early contact will be made to establish the legal position and discuss strategies.

11. Communications with users and parents.

- 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 through appropriate channels in newsletters, the school brochure and on the school Web site;

- The Acceptable Use Statement or Rules for Responsible Internet Use will be printed as posters.

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

School guidelines on issues such as safe Internet use will be established and extended to joint home / school guidelines;
A balanced picture should always be presented to parents;
Demonstrations and practical IT sessions for parents will be organised to encourage a partnership approach;
Suitable educational and leisure activities that make responsible use of the Internet will be developed with parents.

Acceptable Internet Use Statement for Users of Escomb Primary Schools Computer System

The computer system is owned by the school, and may be used by students to further their education. The school's Internet Policy has been drawn up to protect all parties - the pupils, the staff and the school.

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.

- All Internet activity should be appropriate to the pupil's education;
- Pupils should log in to the system using their own personal log in name – and this should not be made available to any other person;
- Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden;
- Users are responsible for all e-mail sent and for contacts made that may result in e-mail being received;
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden;
- Copyright of materials must be respected;
- Posting anonymous messages, forwarding chain letters and causing others to receive unwanted messages or goods is forbidden;
- As e-mail can be forwarded or inadvertently be sent to the wrong person, the same care should be taken with levels of language and

content as for letters or other communications made as a member of the school;

- Use of the network to access inappropriate materials such as pornographic, racist or offensive material is forbidden.

I agree to abide by the above rules and understand that if I break these rules I will be subject to the school's disciplinary procedure which may involve withdrawal of access and other sanctions.

Responsible Internet Use in Supervised Situations

The school has installed computers with Internet access to help our learning. These rules will keep you safe and help us be fair to others.

- I will only access the system with my own login and password, which I will keep secret;
- I will not access other people's files;
- I will only use the computers for school work and homework;
- I will not bring in floppy disks from outside school unless I have been given permission;
- I will ask permission from a member of staff before using the Internet;
- I will only e-mail people I know, or my teacher has approved;
- The messages I send will be polite and responsible;
- I will not give my home address or telephone number, or arrange to meet someone, unless my parent or carer and my teacher has given permission;
- I will report any unpleasant material or messages sent to me. I understand this report would be confidential and would help protect other pupils and myself;
- I understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the Internet sites I visit as well as the E-mails I send and e-mails sent to me.

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents

Responsible Use of the Internet

As part of our enriched Information and Communication Technology curriculum and in response to the challenges of the National Grid for Learning, Your School is providing supervised access to the Internet.

Pupils will be able to exchange electronic mail with partner schools and research information from museums, libraries, news providers and suitable Internet sites as part of their every day classroom experience.

Because there are concerns about pupils having access to undesirable materials, we are taking positive steps to deal with that possibility. We have purchased our Internet access from an educational supplier that operates a filtering system that restricts access to inappropriate materials. All our computers with Internet Access can be seen by a member of staff at all times and, as stated above, access will be supervised.

I enclose a copy of the Rules for Responsible Internet Use that we operate at school.

We believe it is important to publish pupils work on the school web site and give them credit for it because it inspires them to work to a high standard and good work should be celebrated. We do not use full names or give out addresses, phone numbers etc. but when, for example, pupils have won an award, we believe that publicising this encourages and rewards them. If you are not happy about your child's work and or pictures of your child being published on the school web site please contact Headteacher.

We also have a number of leaflets from national bodies that explain issues further and also cover Internet use at home.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

