

# ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## INTERNET USAGE POLICY



### THE MISSION OF OUR SCHOOL IS:

*Christ is the centre of our school community  
where we live, love and learn together.*

This policy outlines our purpose in providing e-mail facilities and access to the internet at St Thomas More's and explains how the school is seeking to avoid the potential problems that unrestricted internet access could give rise to.

### **PART 1 – INTRODUCTION**

#### **PURPOSE**

This is a statement of good computer practices to protect the school from casual or intentional abuse. With the growth in use of e-mail and access to the internet there are a number of threats and legal risks to the school as well as the potential costs of time wasting, that can be avoided by following the practices outlined.

Although both these tools are provided first and foremost for educational purposes, the school accepts that on occasion they may be used for personal use. At all times users should take into account these guidelines and adhere to them.

#### **MONITORING**

The Education Department and the City Council has 3<sup>rd</sup> party "firewall" software and systems in place to monitor all internet usage and these are checked and analysed on a regular basis. Certain sites will be blocked if they are deemed to hold inappropriate or sexually explicit material.

#### **DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

Action will be taken under the City Council's Disciplinary Policy against any users who are found to breach the policies outlined in these guidelines. Significant abuse, particularly involving access to pornographic or offensive images constitutes gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal.

## **PART 2 – RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **GOVERNING BODY**

The policies and these guidelines have been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

### **HEADTEACHER**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher that the policies and guidelines are properly implemented and policed.

### **EDUCATION IT**

Education IT will ensure that the users are notified of their responsibilities with regard to the use of e-mail and the internet. Through the use of 3<sup>rd</sup> party “firewall” software, Education It will monitor internet and e-mail use and the subsequent analysis of this data (in accordance with the Internet and e-mail analysis procedure).

Also, the appropriate security virus prevention mechanisms will be maintained and updated to meet the ongoing requirement of the Department (in accordance with the Virus Protection procedure).

### **EMPLOYEES**

All staff, with access to e-mail and the internet, will be held responsible for complying fully with the School’s guidelines.

## **PART 3 – E-MAIL GUIDELINES**

### **PUPILS**

Pupils will learn how to use an e-mail application and be taught e-mail conventions. Staff and pupils will begin to use e-mail to communicate with others, to request information and to share information.

It is important that communications with persons and organisations are properly managed to ensure appropriate educational use and that the good name of the school is maintained. Therefore:

- Pupils will only be allowed to use e-mail once they have been taught the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and the reasons for these rules;
- Teachers will endeavour to ensure that these rules remain uppermost in the children’s minds as they monitor children using e-mail;
- Pupils may send e-mail as part of planned lessons but will not be given individual e-mail accounts at present;
- In-coming e-mail to pupils will not be regarded as private;
- Children will have the e-mail messages they compose checked by a member of staff before sending them;
- The forwarding of chain letters will not be permitted;
- Pupils will not be permitted to use e-mail at school to arrange to meet someone outside school hours.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Messages sent and received via the Internet are regarded as having the same legal status as a corporate letter. Any material that is viewed as highly confidential or valuable should not be e-mailed externally.

It should be remembered that the Internet does not guarantee delivery or confidentiality.

It should be noted that there are systems in place that can monitor, review and record all e-mail usage, and these will be used.

Analysis of this information may be issued to the Headteacher if though appropriate. No user should have any expectation of privacy as to his/her e-mail.

## **ETIQUETTE**

At all times users should use appropriate etiquette when writing e-mails e.g. e-mails should not be written in capitals as this can be perceived as 'shouting'. Guidance on "netiquette" is provided in the appropriate City Council and Education Services policies and guidelines. These include warnings about the need to be careful about addressing e-mails, particularly when using address groups, in order to send them to only those recipients who will have an interest.

In some instances where the nature of a message may be deemed confidential, it may be appropriate to notify, or even seek permission from, the original sender before forwarding a message onto another recipient.

Please note that, even though there is no current case law, it is possible that e-mail could be covered by Data Protection legislation. In particular the LA advised that the legislation will apply (1) if e-mails identify individuals are filed or organised in a structured manner that could be constituted as a "file" and (2) to documents "attached" to e-mails if they identify individuals.

Also under legislation, individuals have to give permission for data concerning them to be shared particularly if via the internet. So, care needs to be taken regarding e-mailing information that could be linked to a named individual: please consult the Data Protection Officer if in doubt.

## **INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

Users should not send messages that contain any unsuitable material or defamatory statements about other individuals or organisations.

Messages should not contain material or language that could be viewed as offensive to others or as contravening the City Council Equal Opportunities Policy. NB what may appear appropriate to one person might be misconstrued by another.

## **SECURITY**

E-mail is an effective way of communicating confidential information. This is only the case, however, if passwords are secure. To maintain security it is good practice for users to change their passwords regularly.

E-mail should not be left running unattended in any circumstances where this may lead to unauthorised access. The system should be closed and re-opened on return. In no instances should a user login using a colleague's password unless permission has been given.

## **HOUSEKEEPING**

Good housekeeping practices should be adopted so that files are deleted regularly or, if necessary, archived to a separate file.

File attachments, incoming or outgoing through the firewall, should only be sent to a minimum of recipients and not at all if they are large files.

## **PART 4 – INTERNET GUIDELINES**

### **PUPILS**

- Pupils using the Internet will normally be working in the ICT Suite or classroom, during lesson time and will be supervised by an adult (usually the class teacher) at all times;
- Staff will check that the sites pre-selected for pupil use are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils;
- Pupils will not be allowed to access Chat Rooms or Social Networking Sites;
- Staff will be particularly vigilant when pupils are undertaking their own search and will check that the children are following the agreed search plan;
- Pupils will be taught to use e-mail and the Internet responsibly in order to reduce the risk to themselves and others;
- Our Rules for Responsible Internet Use will be posted near computer systems.
- The ICT Subject Leader will monitor the effectiveness of internet access strategies;
- The ICT Subject Leader will ensure that occasional checks are made on files to monitor compliance with the school's Internet Usage Policy;
- The Headteacher will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively;
- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate material will be reviewed in consultation with colleagues from other schools and advise from the LA and our Internet Service Provider.

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 computer screen. *Neither the school nor Birmingham City Council can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.*

A most important element of our Rules of Responsible Internet Use is that pupils will be taught to tell a teacher **immediately** if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### **USING THE INTERNET TO ENHANCE LEARNING**

Pupils will learn how to use a web browser. Older pupils will be taught to use suitable web search engines. Staff and pupils will begin to use the Internet to find and evaluate information. Access to the Internet will become a planned part of the curriculum that will enrich and extend learning activities and will be integrated into the class schemes of work.

As in other areas of their work, we recognise that pupils learn most effectively when they are given clear objectives for Internet use.

Different ways of accessing information from the Internet will be used depending upon the nature of the material being accessed and the age of the pupils;

- Access to the Internet may be by teacher (or sometimes other-adult) demonstration;
- Pupils may access teacher-prepared materials, rather than the open Internet;

- Pupils may be given a suitable web page or a single web site to access;
- Pupils may be provided with lists of relevant and suitable web sites which they may access;
- Older, more experienced, pupils may be allowed to undertake their own Internet search having agreed a search plan with their teacher; pupils will be expected to observe the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and will be informed that checks can and will be made on files held on the system and the sites they access.

Pupils accessing the Internet will be supervised by an adult, normally their teacher, at all times. They will only be allowed to use the Internet once they have been taught the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and the reasons for these rules. Teachers will endeavour to ensure that these rules remain uppermost in the children's minds as they monitor the children using the Internet.

### **RULES FOR BUSINESS USE**

All users will be provided with access to the internet through the Birmingham Grid for Learning. Users should not download any material that is not directly related to their job responsibility. This especially relates to screensavers, images, video games etc.

The ICT Subject Leader should be notified before any software is downloaded for business use: all downloaded software needs to be properly licensed and registered. Any such software automatically becomes the property of the school. There are systems in place to monitor all Internet usage including any software downloads.

### **PERSONAL USE**

Staff are permitted to access the Internet for personal use on a limited basis with approval of their line management as long as this does not interfere with their job responsibilities. This should be in their own time or with the permission of line management.

It should be noted that there are systems in place that can monitor and record all Internet usage, and these will be used. No user should have any expectation of privacy as to his or her Internet usage.

All staff (including teachers, supply staff and classroom assistants) and any other adults involved in supervising children accessing the internet, will be provided with the School Internet Access Policy, and will have its importance explained to them.

Staff found to be in breach of this policy may be disciplined in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. In certain circumstances breach of this policy may be considered gross misconduct resulting in termination of employment. Users must report all suspected breaches of this policy to the Head Teacher.

### **PARENTS**

Parents' attention will be drawn to the policy and will be available for parents and others to read on request.

### **RESPECTING COPYRIGHT**

Staff with Internet access must comply with the copyright laws of all countries relevant to Education Services. Users must not intentionally download any material that holds a copyright notice. This also relates to downloading and copying unlicensed software.

## **SECURITY**

Systems are in place to protect the school's information systems. However users must also be aware of the potential risks associated with accessing the Internet. Staff are reminded that newsgroups are public for a where it may be inappropriate to reveal confidential information.

Users are also reminded that unauthorised usage of a computer could include accessing e-mail or the Internet via a computer other than your own even if doing so under your own user identification, and could contravene City Council ICT Security Policy and even Computer Misuse legislation.

## **VIRUS PROTECTION**

Although virus protection software is installed on all networked computers, users should be aware of the potential hazards associated with computer viruses. Any files that are downloaded will be scanned for viruses before being accessed. If you have any concerns about viruses on the Internet or think you may have accessed material that contains a virus, please contact the ICT Subject Leader or Headteacher.

## **INAPPROPRIATE WEBSITES**

Under no circumstances should a user access a site that contains sexually explicit or offensive material. If you find yourself connected to such a site inadvertently, you should disconnect from that site immediately, and notify the ICT Subject Leader. Because individuals may consider a wide variety of materials offensive, users should not store, view, print or redistribute any material that is not directly related to the user's role or the school's activities.

June 2008

# **ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **RULES FOR RESPONSIBLE INTERNET USE**

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

- Only access the computer system with the log-in and password they have been given.
- Will not access other peoples' files.
- Will not bring in CDs from outside school and try to use them on the school computers.
- Will only access appropriate Internet sites (children must have an adult present).
- Will not access Internet Chat Rooms or Social Networking Sites.
- Will report any unpleasant material immediately.
- Understand that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the internet visited.
- Will immediately report any unpleasant messages sent.
- Understand that e-mail messages received may be read by others.

**Date Agreed by the Governing Body: 16.07.08**

**Signed: .....**