



Internet Use Policy

1. Introduction.

Usually, the resources used by students in the College are carefully chosen by the teacher and determined by curriculum policies. Use of the Internet, by its nature, will provide access to information that has not been selected by the teacher. Whilst students will often be directed to sites which provide reviewed and evaluated sources, at times, they will be able to move beyond these, to sites unfamiliar to the teacher.

The problems and issues that have been highlighted by the media concern all schools. Whilst some of the media interest is hype, there is genuine cause for concern that children might access unsuitable material either accidentally or deliberately.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish the ground rules we have in the College for using the Internet
- Describe how these fit into the wider context of our discipline policy
- Demonstrate the methods used to protect the children from sites containing pornography, racist or politically extreme views and violence

The College believes that the benefits to students from access to the resources of the Internet far exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, the responsibility for setting and conveying the standards that children are expected to follow, when using media and information resources, is one the College shares with parents and guardians.

At Al Siraat College, we feel that the best recipe for success lies in a combination of site-filtering, of supervision and by fostering a responsible attitude in our students in partnership with parents.

Parents will be sent an explanatory letter and the rules that form our Internet Access Agreement (Attached to the end of this policy).

2. Using the Internet for Education

The benefits include:

- access to a wide variety of educational resources including libraries, art galleries and museums
- rapid and cost effective world-wide communication
- gaining an understanding of people and cultures around the globe
- staff professional development through access to new curriculum materials, experts' knowledge and practice
- social and leisure use
- greatly increased skills in Literacy, particularly in being able to read and appraise critically and then communicate what is important to others

The College intends to teach students about the vast information resources available on the Internet, using it as a planned part of many lessons.

All staff will review and evaluate resources available on web sites appropriate to the age range and ability of the students being taught and the IT Co-ordinator will assist in the dissemination of this information.

Initially the students may be restricted to sites that have been reviewed and selected for content. They may be given tasks to perform using a specific group of web sites.

Students will have the opportunity to exchange information via email. They will be taught how to use the address book, how to attach files to an email and how to follow conventions of politeness.

As students gain experience, they will be taught how to use searching techniques to locate specific information for themselves. Comparisons will be made between researching from different sources of information, (CD Rom, books, www). We hope that students will learn to decide when it is appropriate to use the Internet, as opposed to other sources of information, in terms of: the time taken; the amount of information found; the usefulness and reliability of information located.

At times, information, such as text, photos etc may be “downloaded” from the Internet for use in students’ presentations. Tasks will be set to encourage students to view web sites and information with a critical eye.

3. Students’ Access to the Internet

Al Siraat College will use a “filtered” Internet Service, which will minimise the chances of students encountering undesirable material.

Al Siraat College will normally only allow children to use the Internet when there is a responsible adult present to supervise. However it is unrealistic to suppose that the teacher’s attention will always be directed toward the device screen.

Members of staff will be aware of the potential for misuse, and will be responsible for explaining to students, the expectation we have of students.

Teachers will have access to students’ emails and other Internet related files and will check these on a regular basis to ensure expectations of behaviour are being met.

4. Expectations of Students using the Internet

- All students are expected to read and agree to the Internet Agreement.
- At Al Siraat College, we expect all students to be responsible for their own behaviour on the Internet, just as they are anywhere else in the College. This includes materials they choose to access, and language they use.
- Students using the World Wide Web are expected not to deliberately seek out offensive materials. Should any students encounter any such material accidentally, they are expected to report it immediately to a teacher, so that further access to the site can be blocked.
- Students are expected not to use any rude language in their email communications and contact only people they know or those the teacher has approved. They will have been taught the rules of etiquette in email and are expected to follow them
- Students must ask permission before accessing the Internet and have a clear idea why they are using it
- Students should not access other people's files unless permission has been given.
- Devices should only be used for schoolwork and homework unless permission has been granted otherwise.
- No program files may be downloaded to the computer from the Internet. This to prevent corruption of data and avoid viruses.
- No programs on USB, disc or CD Rom should be brought in from home for use in the College. This is for both legal and security reasons.
- Homework completed at home may be brought in on disc or USB but this will have to be virus scanned by the class teacher before use.
- No personal information such as phone numbers and addresses should be given out and no arrangements to meet someone made unless this is part of an approved school project.
- Students consistently choosing not to comply with these expectations will be warned, and subsequently, may be denied access to Internet resources. They will also come under the general discipline procedures of the College which comprises an escalating set of measures including a letter to parents and withdrawal of privileges

5. Web Site Guidelines

A web site can celebrate good work, promote the College, publish resources for projects and homework, and link to other good sites of interest.

- No names and photographs that identify individual children will appear on it
- Home information and e-mail identities will not be included, only the point of contact to the College i.e. phone number, the College address and e-mail to Head/ Coordinator
- Group photos will not contain a names list
- Work displayed will be of the highest quality and reflect the status of the College

6. Internet Agreement

All students and their parents / guardians will be asked to read and sign an agreement covering the expectations we have of students using the Internet in the College.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle, however it may be reviewed before the review date in response to relevant changes, or as requested by the Principal or School Board

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