

Internet Usage Policy

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1. Introduction. Usually, the resources used by pupils in school are carefully chosen by the teacher and determined by curriculum policies. Use of the Internet, by its nature, will provide access to information which has not been selected by the teacher. Whilst pupils 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 school for using the Internet;
- Describe how these fit into the wider context of our discipline;
- Demonstrate the methods used to protect the children from sites containing pornography, racism or politically extreme views and violence.

At FAMAKS we believe that the benefits to pupils from access to resources from the Internet, far outweigh 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 school shares with parents and guardians.

At FAMAKS, 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 pupils in partnership with parents.

Parents will be sent an explanatory letter and the rules which form our Internet Access Agreement (Attached to the end of this document). This can be seen as an extension to the Home School Agreement.

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

- greatly increased skills in Literacy, particularly in being able to read and appraise critically and then communicate what is important to others

The school intends to teach pupils 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 pupils being taught and the ICT Co-ordinator will assist in the dissemination of this information.

Initially the pupils may be restricted to sites which have been reviewed and selected for content. They may be given tasks to perform using a specific group of web sites accessed from a common 'Favourites' menu on the school 'Intranet'.

Pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils’ presentations. Tasks will be set to encourage pupils to view web sites and information with a critical eye.

3. Pupils’ Access to the Internet

The School 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 computer screen.

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

4. Expectations of Pupils using the Internet

- All pupils are expected to read and agree the Internet Agreement.
- At FAMAKS, we expect all pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour on the Internet, just as they are anywhere else in school. This includes materials they choose to access, and the language they use.
- Pupils using the world wide web are expected not to deliberately seek out offensive materials. Should any pupils encounter any such material accidentally, they are expected to report it immediately to a teacher, so that the Service Provider can block further access to the site.

- Pupils are expected not to use any rude language in their email communications and contact only people they know or those the teacher has approved.
- Pupils must ask permission before accessing the Internet and have a clear idea why they are using it
- Pupils should not access other people's files unless permission has been given.
- Computers 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 disc or DVD should be brought in from home for use in school. This is for both legal and security reasons.
- Homework completed at home may be brought in on a flash stick 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.
- Pupils 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 school which comprises an escalating set of measures including a letter to parents and withdrawal of privileges

5 Internet Agreement

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

Pupil Internet Agreement

This is to be read through with your parent(s) and then signed. You will be allowed Internet Access only after this is returned to school.

- We expect all pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour on the Internet, just as they are anywhere else in school. This includes materials they choose to access, and the language they use;
- Pupils using the World Wide Web are expected not to deliberately seek out offensive materials. Should any pupils encounter any such material accidentally, they are expected to report it immediately to a teacher;
- Pupils are expected not to use any rude language in their email communications and contact only people they know or those the teacher has approved. It is forbidden to be involved in sending chain letters;
- Pupils must ask for permission before accessing the Internet;
- Pupils should not access other people's files unless permission has been given;
- Computers 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;
- No programs on disc or DVD should be brought in from home for use in school;
- Homework completed at home may be brought in on flash sticks but this will have to be virus scanned by the class teacher before use;
- Personal printing is not allowed on our network for cost reasons (e.g. pictures of pop groups/cartoon characters);
- 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;
- Pupils consistently choosing not to comply with these expectations will be warned, and subsequently, may be denied access to Internet resources.

I have read through this agreement with my child and agree to these safety restrictions.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Responsible Adult)

Name of child: _____

Dear Parents

Responsible Use of the Internet

The school, at great cost has installed a new computer system which gives the children access to the Internet. Mindful of the problems there are with children gaining access to undesirable materials, we have taken steps to deal with this.

Our Internet has a built-in filtering system that restricts access to sites containing inappropriate content. All our screens are in public view and normally an adult is present to supervise.

No system is perfect, however, and you should be aware that it is not possible to remove entirely the risk of finding unsuitable material. Early indications are that the children benefit enormously from this facility and are using it very responsibly already.

I would ask you to look through these rules and discuss them with your child and then return the signed form to us at school.

If you would like to have a look at our full 'Policy for Internet Access', I will be more than willing to forward you a copy- particularly by email as this is cost free to the school. E-mail me on t.mungate@famakschools.com, marking the subject as 'Internet Policy'.

Yours faithfully

Tapiwa Mungate
ICT Manager