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STATION ROAD KNOWLE SOLIHULL B93 0PT  
01564 773 348  
WWW.ARDEN.SOLIHULL.SCH.UK

Dear Parent/Guardian

### Internet Permission

As part of the school's IT programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. Before being allowed to use the Internet, all pupils must obtain parental permission and both they and you must sign and return the enclosed form as evidence of your approval and their acceptance of the school rules on this matter. Access to the Internet will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases and forums, while exchanging messages with other internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people.

Whilst our aim for Internet use is to further educational goals and objectives, pupils may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to pupils from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, however, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the school supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for access.

During school, teachers will guide pupils towards appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, social media, radio and other potentially offensive media.

We would be grateful if you could read the enclosed guidance documents and then sign the consent form on the 'Multiple Consent' Sheet.

Yours sincerely

**Dave Warwood**  
Associate Headteacher



## **1. Parents' Guide to the Internet**

### **What is the internet?**

The internet was initially created as a link between Universities and Government organisations as a way to share and transfer information. The internet is thousands of computers connected together, sending and receiving information. There are many different types of connection to the internet, ranging from modems to dedicated cables, suitable for the many different users the internet now has. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) often provide many services to users, including email and protection against threats like viruses.

### **What is the World Wide Web? (WWW or Web)**

As the internet grew and its users wanted to share more than text or scientific data, software was created to allow pages with colour, images, sound and even video. These pages link to each other, so a user can move between pages with similar or related content. This is known as browsing or 'surfing' the web or net.

Web sites also started to create directories of pages or even searchable lists of good web pages. As we moved into the new millennium, search engines like Yahoo! and Google allowed users to search for specific pages based on keywords in their content.

It is possible to find many things on the internet today, from encyclopaedias and news sites to games and entertaining videos. Also well-known is the darker side of the web including pornography, racism and supporting material for terrorism.

### **What is email?**

Email is almost as pervasive in our time as the web. It allows users to send electronic messages to each via the internet. The message is stored by their email provider until they next connect to the internet and read it. Schools usually have the ability to provide email addresses to staff and pupils, but we have chosen not to provide pupils with email addresses within the school.

### **What is Instant Messaging? (IM)**

Instant Messaging is another way of communicating over the internet, but unlike email, it is real time. Users can send (typically typed text) messages to each other and will receive them almost instantly. The latest services also include pictures, 'smilies' and even sound. Popular IM services include Whatsapp, Facebook and Messenger. Children and teenagers are particularly heavy users of IM, mainly for social purposes. Instant messaging usually allows only people on a user's contact list to message them. We do not allow IM in school.

### **What are Blogs and homepages?**

Homepages have been online since the creation of the web. They act as a person's 'home' online, saying something about them and who they are. A recent update to the idea was the blog, where the page is often updated daily with new thoughts and comments. Blogs are like diaries on the web which are openly available for anyone to read. They range from very technical descriptions of scientific work and progress to descriptions of someone's social life. Some sites may be set up as homepages for the person who is 'blogging' or as journals of events. Sites such as blogger.com and Tumblr, allow users to create a free blog and will host it for them. Many other sites will allow you to pay to have better hosting and a name for your site. Teenagers, as well as adults, have taken to blogging as a release and a communication tool with peers.

## **What is social media?**

Social media is social interaction amongst people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities. Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Popular sites and apps currently include: Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and Whatsapp.

## **What are message boards and chat rooms?**

Chat rooms work similarly to instant messaging, but instead of using software on the computer, they use a web page as a hub to allow several users to send messages to each of the others in the 'room' at once. Anyone could use a chat room, there are no limits to the people a user might meet there. Message boards are similar but without being real-time. Messages are sent and stored in 'threads' on the message board and can be read at any time. Again, a wide range of people will use a message board and there may not be anyone monitoring what is posted on the message board. Many websites have a message board or 'Forum' to allow users to interact with each other and the owners of the site. They can be a good place to ask questions and meet people from anywhere in the world but should be used with caution.

## **What dangers do children face on the internet?**

It is indisputable that there is material on the internet that is offensive to many people, even dangerous in the wrong hands. There are sites containing unsuitable material which can be accessed in minutes by any child. Many ISPs try to 'filter' sites known to have offensive material, but the web is too big for this to be completely effective. The locations of this material move all the time, the only way to be sure of blocking it all is to allow only a small range of known websites. This kind of 'white-list' destroys the idea of the internet being about free information exchange; the range of information and the dynamic nature of it would be effectively lost.

There has also been great concern in the mass media about children being contacted and 'groomed' by adults online. It is important that children know the dangers of meeting people online, however well they think they know them. Giving personal information out on the internet is dangerous, whether this is over IM, email, message boards or chat rooms. While online friendships are valid and important to teenagers, they must accept that it is much easier to be lied to about who someone is online than in the 'real world'.

The rise in use of email, IM, blogs and personal homepages has given rise to new forms of bullying. Teasing and harassment via messages is easy to trace and deal with but can be very intimidating to teenagers who see it wherever they look. Pictures and comments online seem much more permanent and public than what happens in the playground and can be very hurtful. Photos of other children, even friends, should not be put online without the permission of the parents of that child. This will limit the possibility of websites being used for bullying or being used to 'enable' bullying.

Our service provider, Solihull MBC, makes every effort to block the most offensive of material but the most sensible way to avoid these dangers is to educate pupils and encourage an acceptable use policy and partnership between home and school to deal with the less savoury side of Internet use.

## **How can I get more information?**

There are many magazines and books written on the subject of internet safety, and many resources online including sections on our school website. If you have any specific questions, please contact the school and ask for the Online Safety Co-ordinator.

## **2. School Policy**

### **Pupil Access to the Internet**

The school encourages pupils to use the rich information resources available on the Internet, together with the development of appropriate skills to analyse and evaluate such resources. These skills will be fundamental in the society our pupils will be entering.

Online services significantly alter the information landscape for schools by opening classrooms to a broader array of resources. In the past, teaching and library materials could usually be carefully chosen. All such materials would be chosen to be consistent with national policies, supporting and enriching the curriculum while taking into account the varied teaching needs, learning styles, abilities and developmental levels of the pupils. Internet access, because it may lead to any publicly available site in the world, will open classrooms to electronic information resources which have not been selected by teachers as appropriate for use by pupils.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to prepare students for their future careers. The school expects that staff will begin to investigate possibilities and blend use of such information as appropriate within the curriculum and that staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources. Staff will consult the IT co-ordinator for advice on content, training and appropriate teaching levels consistent with the school's IT programme of study.

Independent pupil use of telecommunications and electronic information resources is not advised and will only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and by pupils themselves.

Access to online resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with people throughout the world. The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the school supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for independent access.

The school's Online Safety Co-ordinator will prepare appropriate procedures for implementing this policy and for reviewing and evaluating its effect on teaching and learning.

## **3. School Procedures**

### **Resource Development**

In order to match electronic resources as closely as possible to the national and school curriculum, teachers need to review and evaluate resources in order to offer 'home pages' and menus of materials that are appropriate to the age range and ability of the group being taught. The Online Safety Co-ordinator will provide appropriate guidance to pupils as they make use of telecommunications and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies. All pupils will be informed, by staff, of their rights and responsibilities as users before their first use, either as an individual user or as a member of a class or group.

As much as possible, the school's chosen information provider has organised information resources in ways that point pupils to those that have been reviewed and evaluated prior to use. While pupils may be able to move beyond those resources to others that have not been evaluated by staff, they shall be provided with guidelines and lists of resources particularly

suited to the learning objectives. Pupils may pursue electronic research independent of staff supervision only if they have been granted parental permission and have submitted all required forms. Permission is not transferable and may not be shared.

## **School Rules**

The school has developed a set of guidelines for Internet use by pupils. These rules will be made available to all pupils and kept under constant review.

All members of staff are responsible for explaining the rules and their implications. All members of staff need to be aware of possible misuses of online access and their responsibilities towards pupils.

## **4. Pupil Guidelines for Internet Use**

### **General**

Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the Internet just as they are in a classroom or a school corridor; general school rules apply.

The Internet is provided for pupils to conduct research and communicate with others. Parents' permission is required. Remember that access is a privilege, not a right, and that access requires responsibility.

Individual users of the Internet are responsible for their behaviour and communications over the network. It is presumed that users will comply with school standards and will honour the agreements they have signed.

Computer storage areas and USBs will be treated like school lockers. Staff may review files and communications to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on servers or disks would always be private.

During school, teachers will guide pupils toward appropriate materials. Outside of school, families bear the responsibility for such guidance with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio and other potentially offensive media.

The following are not permitted

1. Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
2. Using obscene language
3. Harassing, insulting or attacking others
4. Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks
5. Violating copyright laws
6. Using others' passwords
7. Trespassing in others' folders, work or files
8. Unauthorised use of security or remote access software
9. Intentionally wasting limited resources
10. Photographs of children on websites with reference to the name of Arden School unless sanctioned by both parents/guardians and staff
11. Personal web pages.

There are a rapidly growing number of providers of these on the Internet. Parents need to be very aware of the ease with which young people can set up their own Web Page. While these are set up within the privacy of the home there are a number of

dangers inherent in this activity, some general and some that have implications for the school:-

#### General

- The danger of providing personal information and/or contact details
- The danger of activating potentially dangerous contacts

#### School Implications

- Entering information/data relating to other pupils that is likely to cause distress or offence
- Creating the potential to bully or enable bullying to take place
- Entering photographs of pupils without the express permission of the individual's parents

Where such actions have implications for the school we reserve the right to take appropriate action. The nature of the action will be determined by the impact of the data displayed on the website and its effect on individuals belonging to the school community. It is possible that, should the site be so offensive, a pupil will face exclusion. This may be permanent for serious or repeated occurrences.

### Sanctions

1. Violations of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet use.
2. Additional disciplinary action may be added, in line with existing practice, on inappropriate language or behaviour.
3. When applicable, police or local authorities may be involved.

## 5. School IT Resources

School provides IT resources for students to use to enhance teaching and learning, accessible from both inside and outside school. These include:

- Computer hardware and software
- Computer network user accounts, including internet and email account access
- Access to mobile and imaging devices
- Use of your own personal device on a school wireless service.

These resources are provided by the school for teaching and learning purposes only. Any other use of school IT resources is prohibited, regardless of whether you are accessing the resource in school or from another location, e.g. at home. This includes material of the following nature:

- **Illegal** e.g. sexting (exchanging self-generated sexual images of somebody under 16 years old), storing or accessing material which is racist, sexually explicit, fraudulent, or that which incites violence or hatred
- **Inappropriate** e.g. not directly related to your work, for instance playing computer games or social messaging

- **Unauthorised** e.g. accessing material which you are not authorised to access, for instance using someone else's computer account to gain access to their work or a higher level of access
- **Hurtful to other people** e.g. sending bullying emails or offensive computer files
- **A breach of copyright** e.g. storing or accessing copyright protected video, audio, images or software, without appropriate permission, for instance in the format of mp3 audio tracks, etc
- **Detrimental to the operation of school IT systems** e.g. attempting to cause damage to computer equipment either physically or electronically, for instance vandalism and computer 'hacking'
- **An invasion of privacy** e.g. publishing names, addresses, images or other personal details of yourself or another person

The school uses monitoring tools to detect the activities listed above, and log files and backups are kept which record all network usage, including internet access, wireless access and electronic communication. If pupils are found to be using school IT resources for any purpose other than learning, details may be forwarded to the Senior Leadership Team in school and disciplinary action will be taken. If pupils use school IT resources for illegal purposes, the school will also forward the details to external agencies, including the police.

Please be aware that, without notice to you and at any time, a pupil's teacher, Head of Year, the school ESafety Co-ordinator or the IT Support Team may:

- View any document or file stored by a pupil on any school IT facility
- View the contents of any emails or messages that a pupil has sent or received
- View log files of a pupil's network, internet and email
- Use software to view and record the screen of any computer to access/monitor what a pupil is doing.

### **Pupil Computer Account**

Pupils will be given a username and password which will enable them to access a wealth of IT resources provided by the school. Pupils are responsible for all activity which takes place on the school computer network using their account.

To protect themselves and their work, pupils should:

- Never tell anyone else their password
- Choose a password which cannot be easily guessed by other people.

**The pupil's computer account is their responsibility.** If they suspect somebody has access to their account, they should change your password immediately and tell an adult member of staff or the IT Support Team.