

Acceptable Use Policy of Alexandra College

Introduction

Recent issues concerning Internet safety highlighted by the media affect all schools. Whilst some of the media treatment is exaggerated, there are some risks relating to the use of the Internet about which teachers and parents should be made aware. While there are risks of pupils encountering undesirable content, provided that sensible precautions are taken, the Internet is a rich source of high quality attractive material for schools.

The College provides a filter system which is constantly updated. A very common fear is that a student will encounter inappropriate material on the Internet. There is a danger of this happening, against which all schools must take precautions. It is true that a student is as likely to access inappropriate material through television, magazines and videos as through internet access at school. In fact, given the limited time available in school, it is more likely that a student will access inappropriate material from home computer use than during school hours. Parents should ensure that supervised use of the Internet is as vigilant at home as it is in school. This supervision is as vital, as it would be in the case of a pupil's television or video viewing. Software filtering is not a substitute for personal vigilance.

It is important that a sense of perspective is maintained in regard to Internet content and activity. Unwelcome material constitutes only a portion of the information available. However, parents are assured that an Acceptable Use Policy is in place and will be strictly observed by teachers and students. We hope this will provide a reassurance of any fears of abuse that could arise.

General Internet Use Guidelines

Pupils will not use the Internet to seek, read, print, or download any information in any media that would be considered harmful or in anyway detrimental to the health, well-being, or positive development of the pupil by the school staff or by the pupil's parents or guardians. To ensure that pupils will benefit from the school's Internet resources, all users are expected to adhere to the following guidelines.

Pupils will be provided with appropriate guidance as they make use of telecommunication and electronic information resources to conduct research and other studies.

The school has developed a set of guidelines for Internet use by pupils¹. These guidelines will be made available to all pupils, and kept under constant review.

The school rules for Internet use and their implications will be explained to all pupils. Parents will be supplied with copies of the Acceptable Use Policy.

All members of staff are aware of possible misuses of on-line access and of their responsibilities and need for vigilance towards pupils.

Internet sessions will always be closely monitored. Where possible, teachers will preview sites which are intended for use as part of a lesson.

The use of search engines by pupils will be closely monitored or restricted.

Pupil Access to the Internet

Internet access is available to all pupils. The school is pleased to offer this tool as an available resource to both pupils and teachers for reference purposes and for researching project materials.

Pupils will now have ready access to thousands of libraries and databases on every subject written.

Electronic information research skills are fundamental to preparation for living and working. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources.

Pupil use of telecommunications and electronic information will be provided but will only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and by pupils themselves.

Email

Electronic mail, or email, allows pupils to communicate with peers and educationalists around the world. Pupils will send and receive email during supervised sessions. Personal information about the student will not be disclosed without permission from the teacher supervising the session. Email messages containing information which makes a pupil uncomfortable must be reported to the teacher. Pupils are not permitted to respond to such messages. The allocation of personal email addresses (...@alexandracollege.ie) is available to individual pupils with parental consent. The use of web-based e-mail is not permitted in school.

¹ The Guidelines are contained at the end of this policy.

Students should be aware that e-mail messages are open to inspection by the system administrator if any misuse is suspected. Staff will also be required to sign the a proper–use agreement

World Wide Web

Access to on-line resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world. The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher supervision. The school uses filtering software (called Vicomsoft – CyberNot Education Suite) which blocks out webpages containing expletive words, pictures, or topics of an unsuitable nature. Computer logs of all information accessed by students and staff are regularly checked. Any misuse will incur severe penalties.²

School Website

Pupils may create projects, artwork or writing which would be suitable for publication on the World Wide Web. The work will appear in an educational context on web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission. The home address or telephone numbers of pupils will not appear with such work.

Particular care will be taken where photographs of pupils are being used on the school website. Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.

A freer publishing centre for students work is the College Intranet which is a closed environment accessed only within the College.

The school has prepared appropriate procedures for implementing this policy and for reviewing and evaluating its effect on teaching and learning.

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 1998 was passed to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on computer about individuals. In accordance with the Act, the school only publishes pupil information that is relevant to the context of the webpage. Parents are informed of pupil information on the school website.

² Details of the sanctions, as agreed in June 2007, are listed at the end of this policy.

Legal Issues

The use of a computer system without permission or for a purpose not agreed by the school could constitute a criminal offence under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (UK). In many cases, laws relating to copyright, libel, obscenity or incitement to racial hatred are likely to apply to the use of the Internet. While the legal position is not always well defined, schools should bear in mind that there is a legal framework that could be applied to internet use. ³

Guidelines for Internet Use – Staff and Students

The computer system is owned by the College and is made available to students to further their education and to staff to enhance their professional activities including teaching, research, administration and management.

The College Internet Access Policy has been drawn up to protect all parties -the students, the staff and the school.

All Internet activity by teachers should be appropriate to staff professional activity or the student's education.

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

Access is a privilege, not a right and that access requires responsibility.

Activity that threatens the integrity of the school ICT systems, or activity that attacks or corrupts other systems, is forbidden.

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

As e-mail can be forwarded or inadvertently be sent to the wrong person, the same professional levels of language and content should be applied as for letters or other media. No pupil may use bad language, or send messages that could be offensive to another person. Additional disciplinary action may be taken in line with existing approved school practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.

Pupils should never give out personal information such as home address or telephone number in an email message to an unknown recipient.

³ This AUP was developed by Yvonne Canavan during April 2002

Pupils should never make arrangements for an unsupervised meeting with another person on-line without the permission of a teacher/parent.

If a student or staff member receives a message that causes them to feel uncomfortable, it must be reported to the teacher/system administrator. On no account should there be a response to such a message.

Users are responsible for all e-mail sent and for contacts made that may result in e-mail being received.

Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden.

All users will only access the system with their own login and password, which should be secret

Pupils will not access other students' files.

Personal chat room sessions are prohibited.

Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden.

Copyright of materials must be respected.

All users should be familiar with these rules and how to use the Internet before going on-line. If any of the above rules are broken, it will result in a temporary⁴ or permanent ban on Internet and/or computer use.

The school reserves the right to examine or delete any files, e-mail messages and their attachments that may be held on its computer system and to monitor any Internet sites visited. The Principal and/or College Council may view computer logs where misuse is detected.

In Particular:

Any student who, having divulged her password to another person, allows her account to be accessed by another student will also be subject to the same sanctions.

Use of proxy sites to access blocked material is not allowed.

Use of email apart from@alexandracollege.ie is prohibited

⁴ See "Sanctions for abuse of Internet privileges".

Students may not access, at any time of the College system, any site blocked by Vicom Gateway.

Sanction for abuse of Internet privileges

- Your account will be blocked for one month.
- Your year-head will be given a release form and an AUP document for you to sign; it is your responsibility to present these two signed documents to Mr. Redmond (IT co-ordinator) before the end of that month. Your account will not be released without them.

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Students with Apple laptops:

If any student is in breach of the regulations for using her Apple laptop, it will be confiscated for one week. Your year-head will be given a release form and an AUP document for you to sign; it is your responsibility to present these two signed documents to Mr. Redmond (IT co-ordinator) before the end of that week. Your Apple laptops may then be collected from Mr Redmond. Remember that Apple laptops must be kept in your locker when not required in class.

Alexandra College Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Addendum - Use of Laptops and Other Electronic Devices in Class and During Prep.

1. This addendum refers to the use of all **networked devices** in class, including but not restricted to Macbooks, laptops, iPhones, iPods, Blackberrys, Wiis etc.
2. The use of networked devices in class is a privilege and not a right.
3. In class, a teacher's wishes regarding the use of networked devices must be adhered to.
4. Teachers may confiscate any device which is being used inappropriately in class.
5. It is not acceptable to access any material that is not applicable to the class.
6. Playing games, online or otherwise, is not acceptable use of class time.

7. Refusing to show a teacher what you have been doing in class is unacceptable.
8. Hiding or otherwise preventing a teacher from seeing the monitor of any device in class is not acceptable.
9. Unapproved downloading and watching videos , by students, is not acceptable use of class time.

Alexandra College's ICT Department has a stated aim to provide a common platform for use by all students. This ensures that the college can provide full and appropriate support for every laptop and guarantees that all staff and students have the same capabilities for classwork and homework. Any deviation from this will introduce an element of uncertainty on the part of staff in whether each student can complete assignments and research projects quickly and efficiently.

In addition, for the safety of all students, and in compliance with the school's legal obligations all internet access is filtered. That process involves multiple layers of security, including disabling certain network features on the laptops while in the school. The school would not be able to discharge this responsibility on uncontrolled laptops and would therefore have to deny them network access.

Apple Care plan for laptops:

- It **covers** all manufacturing damages (e.g., when your DVD player is not reading disks or when your hard drive fails). The duration of the Apple Care plan is 3 years.
- It **does not cover** accidental/cosmetic damages (e.g. broken screen) or parts that naturally wear out (e.g. batteries, these are under 1 year cover only).
- You are advised to have them added to your home insurance .
- Your laptops are set up to **Synchronise** on Log in and Log out, make sure that you let Synchronisation run fully. It secures and backs up your files on the system. It also lets you create a Mobile Home account on your laptop, so you can use it at home and outside school independently.

- You are advised to get memory sticks or external portable hard drives and back your files up regularly to avoid accidental loss, e.g. if you hard drives fails or any other unexpected failures.
- If a student's laptop breaks or needs repair, the school provides a spare laptop as a replacement, while their own is being sent for repair. It normally takes 1-2 weeks for the repair to complete, depending on the damage.