

RSD Internet Guidelines and Policy

1. Introduction

Internet access is widely available to pupils and teachers in RSD. We are pleased to offer this access in RSD and believe the Internet offers vast, diverse and unique resources to both pupils and teachers. Our aim in providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication.

2. What is the Internet?

The Internet is an electronic information highway connecting many thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. This global “network of networks” is not governed by any entity. This means that there are no limits or checks on the kind of information that is maintained by, and accessible to, Internet users. The educational value of appropriate use of information and resources located on the Internet is substantial.

3. Rationale for pupil use of the Internet

This School encourages use by pupils of the rich information sources available on the Internet, together with the development of appropriate skills to analyse and evaluate such resources. On-line resources offer a broader range of up-to-date resources to pupils; provide an independent research facility; facilitate a variety of learning styles and abilities and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. Internet and email literacy are fundamental requirements for all pupils as preparation for the Information Age - an era where ICT is a dominant factor in work and home life.

4. Networked Access to the Internet

In recognition of these benefits, RSD provides networked Internet Access to pupils in the three Computer Laboratories, as well a large number of locations around the school. The School is determined to provide training for staff and pupils to make best use of these facilities. Pupils will be provided with appropriate training and guidance on how to use the Internet and email during KS3 ICT classes. Appropriate cross-curricular use of the Internet is encouraged. The Internet also plays a key role in supporting the Careers department.

5. How will pupils gain access the Internet at RSD

- In ICT lessons,
- Through subject use across the curriculum,
- At lunch-time and after school.

6. Are there any dangers in using the Internet?

Since the Internet is composed of information from a vast array of sources world-wide, it includes some material that is not of educational value in the context of the school. This material includes information that may be inaccurate, abusive, profane, sexually oriented, racist or illegal. In order to guard young people from any inherent dangers, it is the joint responsibility of school staff and the parent or guardian of each pupil to educate the pupil about his or her responsibility when using the Internet. The following policy sets out the policy for acceptable use of the Internet at RSD.

RSD Policy for the Acceptable use of the Internet

1. For Staff and Pupils

- a) When using the Internet, all users must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity laws.
- b) Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the Internet just as they are in the classroom or a school corridor. General school rules apply. In addition, a number of specific rules relating to use of the Internet also apply.
- c) RSD's curriculum networks are provided with a Broadband link to the Internet through C2K with the ISP services being provided by BT. Filtering is carried out by BT under the control of C2K. If users find themselves connected accidentally to a site which is contrary to a) above, they must disconnect from that site immediately, regardless of whether that site has been previously deemed acceptable by the filtering system. The site should be reported to a member of the ICT staff or the ICT Technician who will record the details and request C2K to review the appropriateness of the site. Similarly if users find a particular site blocked for no apparent reason they can request through a member of the ICT staff or the ICT Technician that it is reviewed by C2K.
- d) Staff and pupils at RSD should **know and understand that** no Internet user is permitted to:
 - retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures;
 - use obscene or racist language;
 - harass, insult or attack others;
 - damage computers, computer systems or computer networks;
 - violate copyright laws;
 - use another user's password;
 - trespass in another user's folders, work or files;
 - intentionally waste resources (such as on-line time and consumables);
 - use the network for unapproved commercial purposes.
- e) RSD will ensure that all pupils understand how they are to use the Internet appropriately and why the rules exist. Pupils will be directed to the pupil version of this policy on first using the Internet, and during subsequent sessions as changes are made/issues arise.
- f) The Internet is provided for pupils to conduct research and communicate with others. While the use of information and communication technologies is a required aspect of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum, access to the Internet remains a privilege **and not a right**. It is given to pupils who act in a considerate and responsible manner, and should be withdrawn if they fail to maintain acceptable standards of use.
- g) During school hours teachers will guide pupils towards appropriate materials. Outside school hours, families bear responsibility for such guidance as they must also exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio, and other potentially offensive media.

2. Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Use

On-line activities which are encouraged include, for example:

- the use of **email** and computer conferencing for communication between colleagues, between pupil(s) and teacher(s), between pupil(s) and pupil(s), between schools and industry;
- use of the Internet to investigate and research school subjects, cross-curricular themes and topics related to social and personal development;
- use of the Internet to investigate careers and Further and Higher education;
- the development of pupils' competence in ICT skills and their general research skills.

On-line activities which are not permitted include, for example:

- searching, viewing and/or retrieving materials that are not related to the curriculum or future careers;
- copying, saving and/or redistributing copyright protected material, without approval;
- subscribing to any services or ordering any goods or services, unless specifically approved by the school;
- playing computer games or using other interactive 'chat' sites, unless specifically assigned by the teacher; (Computer games which are not contrary to any other part of this policy may be permitted at lunchtime and after school in some locations provided that such use does not prevent a machine being used by another pupil for curricular purposes.)
- using the network in such a way that use **of the network by other users is** disrupted (for example: downloading large image files during peak usage times; sending mass email messages);
- publishing, sharing or distributing any personal information about a user (such as: home address; email address; phone number, etc.)
- any activity that violates a school rule.

3. Sanctions

- a) Violation of the above rules will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet use.
- b) Additional disciplinary action may be added in line with existing school rules on inappropriate language or behaviour.
- c) Where applicable, police or local authorities may be involved.

4. Location and Supervision

- a) Internet access for pupils at RSD is currently located in the three ICT rooms and increasingly in other classroom areas. All such machines are in full view of people circulating in the area. (**Note:** This policy applies to all equipment owned or leased to the school no matter where it is located and users are reminded that it applies to the use of such machines at home. The policy is also applicable to any personally owned machine that may be connected to the school network.)
- b) While using the Internet at school, pupils will normally be supervised directly by a member of staff or indirectly by a technician or librarian. Independent electronic research in curricular areas may be carried out but in all cases, pupils should be reminded of their responsibility to use these resources in line with the school policy on acceptable use.
- c) Users will be made aware that RSD network administration staff may review files and communications to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. While normal privacy is respected and protected by password controls, as with the Internet itself, users must not expect files stored on school servers to be absolutely private.

5. Staff use of Internet

- a) Teacher use of the Internet must be in support of the aims and objectives of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The school VLE (Virtual learning Environment) supports the implementation and sharing of effective practices and collaborative networking across the province, as well as nationally and internationally. Staff are encouraged to use Virtual Learning Environment resources as well as other online tools in their teaching and learning activities, to conduct research, and for contact with others in the education world.
- b) Staff will be encouraged to investigate the possibilities provided by access to this electronic information and communication resource, and blend its use, as appropriate, within the curriculum. Staff will be encouraged to identify appropriate and effective use of such skills, and provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the acceptable use of the Internet.
- c) All school staff (both teachers and support staff) are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with the rules of behaviour governing employees in the education sector.

6. Information for Parents

Parents are **informed in writing** of the school policy on acceptable use of the Internet. It is assumed that all parents/guardians agree to pupils accessing the Internet in school and accept the terms of this policy unless they notify the Headmaster in writing. On arrival at RSD, pupils will be asked to sign a summary document before they are granted access to the school network. Queries about the policy should be directed initially to the C2K Manager, Mr KD McGuinness.

In addition to the above parents are given the following guidance by RSD:

1. A home computer with Internet access should be situated in a location where parents can monitor access to the Internet.
2. Parents are encouraged to discuss the use of social networking sites with their children and strongly advised to regularly view the content of their child's contribution to such sites. Please note that the school rules state that:
 - (a) No use may be made of electronic or photographic images or drawings of any person(s) connected to the school, of pupils or members of staff, with or without the knowledge and permission of the subject(s) either to belittle, demean, mock or humiliate them or which are offensive, objectionable or in any way contrary to the law.
 - (b) No statements on publicly accessible websites or in the media may be made which might bring the school into disrepute in any way of which are malicious, offensive, derogatory or defamatory about pupils or members of staff, past or present, with or without the use of offensive, obscene, crude or blasphemous language in any context in which the school appears or is referred to in any way. Such material or words, once discovered must be removed immediately pending disciplinary action being taken by the school.
3. Parents should discuss with their children the school rules for using the Internet and implement these at home. Parents and children should decide together when, how long, and what comprises appropriate use;
4. Parents should get to know the sites their children visit, and talk to them about what they are learning;
5. Parents should consider using appropriate Internet filtering software for blocking access to unsavoury materials. Further information is available from Parents' Information Network (address below);
6. It is not recommended that any child under 16 should be given unmonitored access to newsgroups or chat facilities;
7. Parents should ensure that they give their agreement before their children give out personal identifying information in any electronic communication on the Internet, such as a picture, an address, a phone number, the school name, or financial information such as credit card or bank details. In this way they can protect their children (and themselves) from unwanted or unacceptable overtures from strangers, from unplanned expenditure and from fraud.
8. Parents should encourage their children not to respond to any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages, and to tell them if they receive any such messages or images. If the message comes from an Internet service connection provided by the school, they should immediately inform the school.

There are a number of resources and organisations available online that will offer guidance and support in the safe use of the Internet. A small selection of these are detailed below. Many of the resources available are suitable for parents and children with interactive content that will help to educate your child in the safe use of the Internet:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.kidsmart.org.uk

www.ikeepsafe.org

www.getsafeonline.org

This policy acknowledges and complies with DENI circular 1999/25 on the subject of Acceptable Use of the Internet for Schools and the Acceptable Use Policy developed by National Association of Co-ordinators and Teachers of IT.