

PARKSIDE HOUSE SCHOOL

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DFE NO: 3926011

Our Ref: BY/JB

CREATING A SAFE ICT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
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Dear Parent / Carer

ICT in the 21st Century has an all-encompassing role within the lives of children and adults. New technologies are enhancing communication and the sharing of information. Current and emerging technologies used in school and, more importantly in many cases, used outside of school by children include:

- The Internet
- e-mail
- Instant messaging (<http://www.msn.com>, <http://info.aol.co.uk/aim/>) often using simple web cams
- Blogs (an on-line interactive diary)
- Podcasting (radio / audio broadcasts downloaded to computer or MP3/4 player)
- Social networking sites (Popular www.myspace.com / www.piczo.com / www.bebo.com / <http://www.facebook.com>)
- Video broadcasting sites (Popular: <http://www.youtube.com/>)
- Chat Rooms (Popular www.teenchat.com, www.habbohotel.co.uk)
- Gaming Sites (Popular www.neopets.com, <http://www.miniclip.com/games/en/>, <http://www.runescape.com/> / <http://www.clubpenguin.com>)
- Music download sites (Popular <http://www.apple.com/itunes/> <http://www-livewire.com/>)
- Mobile phones with camera and video functionality
- Mobile technology (e.g. games consoles) that are 'internet ready'.
- Smart phones with e-mail, web functionality and cut down 'Office' applications.

Much of the material on the Internet is published for an adult audience and some is unsuitable for pupils. In addition, there is information on weapons, crime and racism that would be considered inappropriate and restricted elsewhere.

In line with school policies that protect pupils from other dangers, there is a requirement to provide pupils with as safe an Internet environment as possible and to teach pupils to be aware of and respond responsibly to any risk.

Whole school approach to the safe use of ICT

Creating a safe ICT learning environment includes three main elements at this school:

- An effective range of technological tools;
- Policies and procedures, with clear roles and responsibilities;
- A comprehensive e-Safety education programme for pupils, staff and parents.

E-Safety is recognised as an essential aspect of strategic leadership in this school the Head aims to embed safe practices into the culture of the school. The head teacher ensures that the Policy is implemented and compliance with the Policy monitored. All teachers are responsible for promoting and supporting safe behaviors in their classrooms and following school e-Safety procedures. Central to this is fostering a 'No Blame' culture so pupils feel able to report any bullying, abuse or inappropriate materials.

The school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure e-Safety. However, owing to the international scale and linked nature of Internet content, the availability of mobile technologies and speed of change, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a school computer or mobile device. But we will do all in our power to make sure the pupils of Parkside House School are safe.

Staff and pupils are given information about infringements in use and possible sanctions. Sanctions available include:

- interview/counselling by tutor / e-Safety Coordinator / Head teacher;
- informing parents or carers;
- removal of Internet or computer access for a period,
- referral to the Police.

Our e-Safety Coordinator acts as first point of contact for any complaint. Any complaint about staff misuse is referred to the Head teacher.

Complaints of cyber bullying are dealt with in accordance with our Anti/Cyber Bullying Policy. Complaints related to child protection are dealt with in accordance with school / child protection procedures.

Social Networking Sites & Chat Rooms

These are a popular aspect of the web for young people. Many sites allow for 'real-time' online chat, sites such as, MSN, My Space, Facebook, Bebo, and YouTube allow users to share and post web sites, videos, podcasts etc. It is important for children to understand that these sites are public spaces where adults hang out. They are environments that should be used with caution. Users, both pupils and staff, need to know how to keep their personal information private and set-up and use these environments safely. However, pupils need to be taught safe behavior as they may well be able to readily access them outside of school.

Policy and Procedures

At Parkside House School

- We Supervise pupils' use at all times, as far as is reasonable.
- We have additional user-level filtering, so adapt filtering to the age of the pupils
- Informs users that Internet use is monitored
- Informs staff and students that that they must report any failure of the filtering systems directly to the [e-Safety Coordinator / teacher / Head teacher
- Blocks all Chat rooms and social networking sites
- Ensures parents provide consent for pupils to use the Internet, as well as other ICT technologies, as part of the e-safety acceptable use agreement.
- Makes clear all users know and understand what the 'rules of appropriate use' are and what sanctions result from misuse – through staff meetings and teaching programmes.
- Makes information on reporting offensive materials, abuse / bullying etc available for pupils, staff and parents.