

Woodbrook College Bray, Co. Wicklow



Acceptable Usage Policy

This policy was drafted in consultation with the education partners at Woodbrook College, Bray, Co. Wicklow and in accordance with relevant Department of Education and Skills circulars and best educational practice. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management On October 20th, 2014

Introduction

Woodbrook College is committed to providing Information Communication Technology (ICT) resources, including e-mail and internet access, for use as an educational tool and to promote its aims and objectives. These resources will be available for use in various classes and at other times (under supervision) as an educational resource by pupils. Such resources will be made available to students for classroom activities, career development and for activities such as project work and research. It is an educational resource of considerable significance and value but one that also has inherent dangers. In the interests of ensuring as safe an environment as possible for pupils and staff, this policy has been produced.

The computer network and all individual computers are the property of Woodbrook College and are to be used for legitimate school business purposes only. All users have a responsibility to use the school's ICT resources and internet in a professional, lawful and ethical manner.

To protect the security of the school's ICT network, the use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's permission.

Internet Access

This section of the policy has been designed to protect the staff and the school. The Board of Management of Woodbrook College has a responsibility to support and educate staff and students in the use of the Internet to ensure that they do not unwittingly get themselves and the school into an activity that may result in either a criminal action or a legal claim being taken. The Policy explains what the school expects in terms of e-mail and Internet usage. The Policy states some general rules and then identifies six areas (pornography, harassment, copyright, contracts, defamation and confidentiality) where legal or criminal problems may arise. Under each section there is an explanation of the potential problems and some rules to help avoid these problems.

General Rules for Students

To safeguard individual users and to ensure the integrity and reliability of the ICT system, students of Woodbrook College must observe the following rules in relation to ICT:

Internet

- The Internet is provided as an educational resource and is to be used for that purpose only.
- You may not access the internet online without the permission of a teacher who will connect it for you and who will remain present during the entire session.
- You may not participate in chat room sessions without the express permission of a teacher who is present for the entire session and who is made aware of the nature of the chat.
- You may not register or sign visitor's books at Web sites without permission.
- You may not give personal details, about yourself or anybody else, such as name, address, telephone number over the Internet without the permission of a teacher who has monitored what you are doing.
- You should never arrange to meet anyone through the Internet without obtaining permission from your parents.
- Any encounter with material on the Internet which makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened or which you feel undesirable or unsafe should be reported immediately to the teacher present or the school Principal.
- All computer passwords must be made known in writing to school management. No password

may be used that has not been made known to the school authorities. Keep all your passwords secure. You are responsible for all uses, including illicit use, of e-mail and Internet under your password.

- Do not deliberately visit, view or download any material from any web site containing sexual or illegal material which is offensive in any way whatsoever
- To prevent computer viruses from infecting the school system do not download any software onto the school's system. This includes software and shareware available free on the Internet. Such material may be downloaded only through the IT department.
- The Woodbrook College web page should not be interfered with or changed in any way without prior authorisation from the Principal.
- You must not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses or by any other means.
- Students are not permitted to visit social networking sites via the school computers.
- On no account should a student alter or replace the screen saver on any school computer monitor.

Email

- You may not open e-mail attachments from unsolicited or unknown sources. Please bring these to the attention of the teacher present at the time. Never open or save any executable file (i.e. those ending in "exe" or "vbs"). Tell the teacher immediately.
- Remember that e-mail is effectively on official headed paper and can be traced back to place, date and time of sending. Make sure you are satisfied with its content before sending an email. Once the "send" key is pressed, e-mail cannot be stopped or retrieved. Deleting mail from your system does not make it untraceable.
- Ask yourself before sending an e-mail, how would you feel if your message were read out in court? E-mail messages may have to be read out in litigation. An e-mail should be regarded as a written formal letter, the recipients of which may be much wider than the sender intends.
- All e-mails must be sent under school headings and you should make and keep hard copies and/or soft copies of all e-mails sent.
- Do not impersonate any other person when using e-mail or amend messages received.
- Do not import any non-text file, including files received as e-mail attachments, onto your system without first checking them for viruses using the approved software. If you send an e-mail with attachment you must include the following statement in your message: *"we cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage sustained as a result of software viruses. It is your responsibility to carry out such virus checking as is necessary before opening any attachment"*.
- You should not use inappropriate language i.e. language which is or could be perceived as obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening or disrespectful when composing emails.
- Do not send any material which may be offensive or disruptive to others or which may be construed as harassment. Do not make derogatory comment regarding gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the travelling community.
- You will not post chain letters or engage in "spamming". Spamming is sending an annoying or unnecessary message to a large number of people.
- Emails are confidential messages and are governed by Data Protection legislation. No person is authorised to retrieve or read any e-mail messages that are not addressed to them.
- Responsibilities under Data Protection Legislation extends to the school authorities also who do not normally read individuals mail or open mail boxes except:
 - 1) where the screening software or a complaint from an individual indicates that a

- particular mailbox contains material which is dangerous or offensive.
- 2) where a legitimate work reason exists to open the e-mail.

In such instances, the account holder will be informed of the situation and their cooperation sought in addressing any concerns which exist.

- Opening mailboxes for investigation requires authorisation by the Principal on a case by case basis. The individual's mailbox, hard disk, network drive and relevant backups are then searched. The staff member may be present at this function. Where investigation proves that a problem exists it will be reported to the sender, their organisation and the individual concerned for appropriate action. Where the problem concerns material such as a virus or an unauthorised .exe file, which can damage the network, the Principal may immediately close down an account pending further investigation and action.

Pornography

As there can be no legitimate educational use for accessing or transmitting sexually explicit materials in the school environment, the question of whether or not sexual material constitutes pornography is not relevant to use of the school's e-mail and Internet access. No student or member of staff can access or transmit any material with a pornographic content.

If you accidentally open a web site containing pornographic material then you should close it immediately and report the time and the web site to the class teacher. The system records all activity and as it will be monitored it is necessary to report in advance to eliminate further inquiries.

What are the consequences of not following this Policy?

The display on screen of sexual matter or the transmitting of such material to other people may constitute sexual harassment (see the harassment section of this Policy). Accessing and transmitting sexual material may be a criminal offense for which both you and the school may be liable. The Gardaí or other appropriate authority will be informed where appropriate.

N.B. To download or send pornography or to deliberately view pornography which involves an image of a child or what appears to be an image of a child may be a criminal offence. In line with educational policy, Google Safe Search has been activated on all school computers.

Harassment

It is the policy of the school that all members of the school community must be allowed to study/work in an environment free from harassment of any kind. This includes (but is not limited to) sexual harassment, or harassment on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling Community.

What is harassment?

“Harassment” occurs where a person subjects another person (“the victim”) to any unwelcome act, request or conduct, including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, which in respect of the victim is based on any discriminatory ground and which could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her.

“Sexual Harassment” takes place where a person subjects another person (“the victim”) to an act of physical intimacy, or requests sexual favours from the victim, or subjects the victim to any act or conduct with sexual connotations, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, where

- (i) the act, request or conduct is unwelcome to the victim, and
- (ii) it could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her, or
- (iii) the victim is treated differently by reason of his or her rejection of or submission to the act, request or conduct, or it could reasonably be anticipated that the victim would be so treated.

No member of the school community may use the internet to harass another person.

What are the consequences of not following this Policy?

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you. In addition, harassment is a criminal offence for which the harasser can be imprisoned. Victims of harassment may be able to claim damages from the harasser and from the school.

Copyright

The owner of copyright has the exclusive right in certain works such as documents, articles, books, plays, films, recordings and musical compositions, so that they cannot be copied or used in certain other ways without the consent of the copyright owner.

What you must not do

No member of the school community may download, copy or transmit to third parties the works of others without their permission as this may infringe copyright. Copyright is most likely to be breached when you download material from the Internet or when you copy text or attach it to an e-mail message. You must not plagiarize works you find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were your own.

What are the consequences of not following this Policy?

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you. In addition, you and the school can be sued by the owner of the copyright for damages for unauthorised use of the copyright material.

Defamation

Defamation is the publication of a statement which adversely affects a person's or the school's reputation. Publication may be by way of Internet or e-mail.

No member of the school community may knowingly or recklessly send or circulate, internally or externally, false or defamatory information about a person or organisation. In particular, you must not send or circulate, internally or externally, any information which contains negative comments about an individual, organisation or business without first checking that the contents of the information are accurate.

What are the consequences of not following this Policy?

A person, organisation or business defamed may sue you and the school for damages. There is a defence that the information was "true", but the onus would be on you or the school to show that. Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Confidential Information

In general terms, confidential information includes any information which is not available to the general public.

You will not post private information about another person. E-mails containing information that is in any way sensitive or confidential must include the following statement:

“the information included in this e-mail is of a confidential nature and is intended only for the addressee. If you are not the intended addressee, any disclosure, copying or distribution by you is prohibited and may be unlawful. Disclosure to any party other than the addressee, whether inadvertent or otherwise is not intended to waive privilege or confidentiality.”

What are the consequences of not following this Policy?

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Entering Contracts

A contract is an agreement between two or more parties to create legal obligations between them. Contracts can be made orally or in writing. Binding contracts can be formed by e-mail. E-mail may appear informal but you must take care not to enter contractual obligations without the usual care and attention to detail to protect the school's interests.

What you must not do:

You must not enter into any contract that incurs costs outside budgets duly approved for you or your department. You may not download any software except through the IT department. You may not enter into any contract involving the school without the express authority of the Principal to do so.

What are the consequences of not following this Policy?

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you. The school reserves the right to pursue individuals for any unauthorised costs which they incur and for which the school becomes liable.

Sanctions

By using the ICT facilities in Woodbrook College, you are automatically agreeing to abide by the above rules. All users should be aware that your use of the Internet is recorded and can be easily monitored and traced. Records of your internet usage may be made available to third parties in certain circumstances.

Students

Misuse of the Internet or ICT resources or attempts to access material which is considered undesirable or which is illegal (e.g. pornography, subversive material, drug abuse information, etc.) may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and in extreme cases, detention, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Staff

All employees, teaching staff and ancillary staff, are expected to utilise ICT resources in an ethical, legal and responsible manner. As with all users, attempts to access material which is considered undesirable or which is illegal (e.g. pornography, subversive material, drug abuse information, etc.) on the school premises or using school equipment may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Additional Notes

The following highlight a number of areas that you, as a user, must pay particular attention to:

- You must respect the laws of Ireland and specifically, but not exclusively, be aware of your responsibilities under:- Copyright Act (1963) and as amended, Data Protection Act (1988), Prohibition of incitement to hatred Act (1989), Criminal Damage Act (1991), Freedom of Information Act (1997), Child Trafficking and Pornography Act (1998)
- You must behave reasonably in your use of the School's ICT resources. You must not undertake or facilitate any activity that could jeopardise in any way, the integrity, reliability and performance of these resources. Wilful damage (or attempted damage) to ICT resources will result in disciplinary action which may include prosecution under appropriate legislation.
- Likewise deliberately wasteful use of resources and time could lead to severe disciplinary action. Nor is it acceptable to attempt to access any files, data or records for which you are not authorised. Internet usage of non-related business sites is prohibited
- Students are not permitted to send "Friend Requests" to teachers via Facebook. Any student who does so, irrespective of their intentions, will face disciplinary action.
- All Software installed and used on the School's ICT systems, including stand-alone computers, must be appropriately licensed.
- If you have access to or are responsible for any data, you must ensure that the integrity, accessibility, accuracy and confidentiality of such data are maintained.
- Data may not be removed from the School network or transferred, copied or moved to user's personal computers or devices.

Advice for Parents and Teachers

It is important to stress at the outset that, due to the nature of the technology and the uses and abuses to which it is put, it is not possible to guarantee the safety of all children using the internet, the World-Wide Web or other on-line services. However, with appropriate precautions, it should be possible to greatly minimise the risks involved. It is widely believed that the potential benefits for students and teachers of using this technology far outweigh any risks involved. Any dangers inherent in Internet use can be compared to similar risks associated with other electronic media. Adequate supervision is vital, as it would be in the case of a child's television or DVD viewing. Controlling access to the sites and services used and ensuring that children act responsibly while on-line are important steps in the process. Children should be informed that their on-line activities will be monitored and that they are accountable for their behaviour.

Amendments

The Board of Management of Woodbrook College may amend this Policy at any time

Acceptable Usage Policy Consent Form

All students and parents must read the school Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy which is available on the school website at www.saintbrendans.ie or available in hardcopy from the school reception on request. Parents/guardians and students should then sign and return the consent form below to the Principal. All students are bound by the terms of this policy even where a consent form has not been returned.

Name of Pupil: _____

Class/Year: _____

Pupil

I agree to abide by the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy. I will use the Internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school.

Pupil's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above named pupil, I have read the Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and grant permission for him/her to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible for the unauthorised access by pupils of unsuitable material.

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork/image may be chosen for inclusion on the website.

Parents/Guardians Signature: _____

Date: _____

Review

Review Date:.....