Use of the Internet – Wales International School

1. Introduction.

Usually, the resources used by students in school are carefully chosen by the teacher and determined by curriculum policies. Use of the Internet, by its nature, will provide access to information which has not been selected by the teacher. Whilst students will often be directed to sites which provide reviewed and evaluated sources, at times, they will be able to move beyond these, to sites unfamiliar to the teacher.

The problems and issues that have been highlighted by the media concern all schools. Whilst some of the media interest is hype, there is genuine cause for concern that children might access unsuitable material either accidentally or deliberately.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish the rules we have in school for using the Internet
- Describe how these fit into the wider context of our behaviour and PHSE policies
- Demonstrate the methods used to protect the children from sites containing racist or politically extreme views , violence and other inappropriate materials not in line with the heritage and culture of the UAE

The school believes that the benefits to students from access to the resources of the Internet, far exceed the disadvantages. Ultimately, the responsibility for setting and conveying the standards that children are expected to follow, when using media and information resources, is one the school shares with parents and guardians.

At Wales International Private School, we feel that the best recipe for success lies in a combination of site-filtering, of supervision and by fostering a responsible attitude in our students in partnership with parents.

Parents will be sent an explanatory letter and the rules which form our Internet Access Agreement (Attached to the end of this document).

2. Using the Internet for Education

The benefits include:
- access to a wide variety of educational resources including libraries, art galleries and museums
- rapid and cost effective world-wide communication
- gaining an understanding of people and cultures around the world
- staff professional development through access to new curriculum materials, experts' knowledge and practice
- social and leisure use
- greatly increased skills in literacy, particularly in being able to read and appraise critically and then communicate what is important to others

The school intends to teach students about the vast information resources available on the Internet, using it as a planned part of many lessons.

All staff will review and evaluate resources available on web sites appropriate to the age range and ability of the students being taught and the IT administrator will assist in the dissemination of this information.

Initially the students may be restricted to sites which have been reviewed and selected for content.

As students gain experience, they will be taught how to use searching techniques to locate specific information for themselves. Comparisons will be made between researching from different sources of information, (CD Rom, books, internet). We hope that students will learn to decide when it is appropriate to use the Internet, as opposed to other sources of information, in terms of: the time taken; the amount of information found; the usefulness and reliability of information located.

At times, information, such as text, photos etc may be "downloaded" from the Internet for use in students' presentations. Tasks will be set to encourage students to view web sites and information with a critical eye.

Students will be encouraged to contribute to the design, construction and maintenance of the school website.

3   Students' Access to the Internet

Wales International Private School will normally only allow children to use the Internet when there is a responsible adult present to supervise. However it is unrealistic to suppose that the teacher's attention will always be directed toward the computer screen.

Members of staff will be aware of the potential for misuse, and will be responsible for explaining to students, the expectation we have of students.

Teachers will have access to students' internet related files and will check these on a regular basis to ensure expectations of behaviour are being met.

4. **Expectations of Students using the Internet**

- All students are expected to read and agree the Internet Agreement.

- At Wales, we expect all students to be responsible for their own behaviour on the Internet, just as they are anywhere else in the school. This includes materials they choose to access, and language they use.

- Students using the World Wide Web are expected not to deliberately seek out offensive materials. Should any students encounter any such material accidentally, they are expected to report it immediately to a teacher, so that the Service Provider can block further access to the site.

- Students must ask permission before accessing the Internet and have a clear idea why they are using it

- Students should not access other people's files unless permission has been given.

- Computers should only be used for schoolwork and homework unless permission has been granted otherwise.

- No program files may be downloaded to the computer from the Internet. This to prevent corruption of data and avoid viruses.

- No programs on disc or CD Rom should be brought in from home for use in school. This is for both legal and security reasons.

- Homework completed at home may be brought in on a flash drive, but this will have to be virus scanned by the class teacher before use.

- Students consistently choosing not to comply with these expectations will be warned, and subsequently, may be denied access to Internet resources. They will also come under the general behaviour procedures of the school which comprises an escalating set of measures including a letter to parents and withdrawal of privileges

5. **Web Site Guidelines**

A website can celebrate good work, promote the school, publish resources
for projects and homework, and link to other good sites of interest.
- No names and photographs that identify individual children will appear on it
- Home information and e-mail identities will not be included, only the point of
  contact to the school i.e. phone number, school address and e-mail to school
- Group photos will not contain a names list
- Work displayed will be of the highest quality and reflect the status of the school

6. **Internet Agreement**
All students and their parents / guardians will be asked to read and sign an
agreement covering the expectations we have of students using the Internet in
school.

Wales International School Student Internet Agreement

This is to be read through with your parent(s) and then signed. You will be allowed Internet Access after this is returned to school.

- At Wales, we expect all students to be responsible for their own behaviour on the Internet, just as they are anywhere else in school. This includes materials they choose to access, and language they use.

- Students using the World Wide Web are expected not to deliberately seek out offensive materials. Should any students encounter any such material accidentally, they are expected to report it immediately to a teacher

- Students must ask permission before accessing the Internet

- Students should not access other people's files unless permission has been given

- Computers should only be used for schoolwork and homework unless permission has been granted otherwise

- No program files may be downloaded to the computer from the Internet

- No programs on disc or CD Rom should be brought in from home for use in school

- Homework completed at home may be brought in on a flash drive, but this will have to be virus scanned by the class teacher before use

- Students consistently choosing not to comply with these expectations will be warned, and subsequently, may be denied access to Internet resources.

I have read through this agreement with my child and agree to these safety restrictions.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Responsible Adult)

Name of child: _____ Class: _____

Dear Parents

Responsible Use of the Internet

Wales International Private School has installed a new computer system which gives the children access to the Internet. Mindful of the problems there are with children gaining access to undesirable materials, we have taken steps to deal with this.

Our Internet has a built in filtering system that restricts access to sites containing inappropriate content. All our screens are in public view and an adult is present to supervise.

No system is perfect, however, and you should be aware that it is not possible to remove entirely the risk of finding unsuitable material. We are informing you of the rules which the children are expected to follow to help with our precautions.

I would ask you to look through these rules and discuss them with your child and then return the signed form to us at school.

If you would like to have a look at our full 'Policy for Internet Access', I will be more than willing to forward you a copy.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Kate O'Sullivan
Principal