

CHILD PROTECTION AND TECHNOLOGY

The Internet and Child Protection

The Internet offers an extremely vital resource to pupils, staff and parents in terms of education and learning resources and for communication networks across the globe. However we also know that new technology gives people who are sexually interested in children a new medium to network, share information and fantasies, explore new identities and normalise their behaviour. This adds another dimension to the degree and nature of the risks to children. Developments in technology happen considerably faster than legislation and best practice guidance can keep up with and so it is imperative to remain vigilant about ongoing developments in this challenging area.

The Internet is the prime medium for the distribution of abusive images of children. Photographs taken with a digital camera can later be transmitted onto the Internet and then be digitally manipulated to create abusive images of children. Video recording apparatus is now very compact and this can also be easily transmitted on the Internet.

Mobile Phone Technology and the Internet

We know that pupils can access information technology themselves (eg at home or by bringing mobile phones to school). National figures show that 52% of 7 to 16 year olds own a mobile phone. The new GPRS & 3G phone technology will increase opportunities for pupils to communicate and access web sites and other Internet services away from the supervision of their parent/guardians. The ICT strategy aims to educate pupils about inappropriate use of technology and staff about their responsibility, whether or not they are ICT specialists, through all aspects of the curriculum.

Bullying and Technology

The use of the Internet as a bullying tool between young people is becoming increasingly common and can be extremely damaging to the victim.

Pupils could place an image of their friends or peer group onto the Internet. This may be done innocently to send a photograph to a friend or alternatively with the intention of causing embarrassment or even humiliation to the person depicted in the image.

There is growing concern about how technology can be misused to bully or harass eg. sending unpleasant e-mails or text messages. The non-personal nature of

communicating through text messages or e-mails seems to allow young people to behave in a way which would be far more difficult if they were having face to face contact.

To help address these problems we should ensure that we:

- Advise pupils and parents of the potential dangers of Internet chat rooms and misuse of technology eg digital photography, photographic mobile phones, video taping and web sites, (according to their age and understanding). This may be through special whole school events, PSHE lessons or tutorials, reminders in Homework diaries about safe use of the Internet at home.
- Communicate any restrictions and consequent sanctions that may be imposed in order to promote the ICT Acceptable Use policy to all pupils (according to their age and understanding), parents and guardians.
- Make pupils aware that the ICT Acceptable Use policy applies to behaviour towards staff, volunteers and pupils

Reporting concerns:

Any concerns about the misuse of technology should be reported:

- *Pupils* should inform their Form Teacher
- *Staff & Volunteers* should inform their line manager/ supervisor or the Designated Teacher
- *The Designated Teacher, who is the Head or Head of Junior House at DHS*, in liaison with the ICT Manager should consider reporting any identified illegal activity or concerns regarding Internet sites or material to the police and/or Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) as appropriate. Further information available at www.internetwatchfoundation.gov.uk

Related policies:

Anti-bullying

ICT

ICT Acceptable Use

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