BLESSINGTON EDUCATE
TOGETHER NATIONAL
SCHOOL

INTERNET SAFETY: ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Ratified by Board of Management on:	
Signed:	
Date:	
Chairperson, Board of Management	

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1.0   RATIONALE

The internet is a popular research and communication tool at home and at school. Due to the fact it is an unregulated medium, and has the capacity to host any type of information from online communities all over the world, the need for information and resources on internet safety and related issues has never been more essential. The internet gives access to people and certain kinds of information that are unsuitable for children and may potentially have a negative impact on children's attitudes, behaviour and well-being.

Although it is widely believed the potential benefits of using the internet as a learning tool far outweigh any risks involved, it is however, important to be aware of the risks and their impact from the outset in order to equip pupils with the necessary information and skills to navigate safely on the net.

2.0   AIMS

The aim of this Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy for Blessington Educate Together National School (BETNS) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school policy is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions as outlined within this policy will be imposed.

It is envisaged that both school and parent representatives will review the Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy regularly. The policy should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood, parents/guardians are required to sign the attached form.

3.0   RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1   BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
- Ensure that the policy is adhered to and regularly updated.
- Ensure appropriate virus software, filtering software and/or equivalent systems are used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.

3.2   SCHOOL WEBSITE/FACEBOOK PAGE ADMINISTRATORS
- Ensure that the publishing of photographs, pupils work complies with this policy.
- Ensure that any posts made by children under the age of 13 to the Facebook page are deleted and the children blocked from the page.

3.3   PRINCIPAL AND STAFF
- Discuss the content of this policy in detail before permitting pupils access to internet facilities.
- Develop pupil's skills and knowledge of the internet.

- Preview topic specific sites for pupils prior to allowing pupil access.
- Provide adequate supervision for pupils whilst accessing internet resources.
- Follow-up on inappropriate use of computer hardware, software and internet use.

3.4 PARENTS/GUARDIANS
- Discuss internet safety with your child.
- Ensure that children under the age of 13 do not post on the school Facebook page.
- Read, sign and return the *Internet safety: Acceptable use policy* permission form (Appendix A).

3.5 PUPILS
- Pupils will treat others with respect and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Pupils will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Pupils will use the Internet for educational purposes only during class and only sites authorised by class teachers.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials to teachers.
- Pupils will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Pupils will not post to the schools Facebook page.

4.0 SCHOOL'S STRATEGY

Blessington Educate Together National School will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet. These strategies are listed as follows:

4.1 GENERAL
- Internet sessions will always be supervised.
- Filtering software, such as (Fortiguard web filtering software) and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will monitor pupils Internet usage.
- Pupils and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal floppy disks, memory sticks, CDs or other digital storage media from outside school is permitted on school computers after virus scanning has successfully completed.
- Pupils will treat others with respect and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

- Pupils will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Pupils will use the Internet for educational purposes only during class time. During Golden Time, they may be allowed to use the Internet for entertainment purposes. However, all web sites will be vetted by the class teacher.

4.2   SEARCHING AND DOWNLOADING FROM THE INTERNET
- Pupils will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Pupils will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Pupils will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

4.3   ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION (E-MAIL / CHAT ROOMS)
- Personal e-mail will not be permitted in school. However, classes may have their own e-mail account accessible through the class teacher's computer. Pupils will use approved e-mail accounts only under supervision.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students will not have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication fora.

4.4   SCHOOL WEBSITE
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork on the World Wide Web.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The publication of pupil's work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages.
- Photographs of children will not be published without the written consent of parents/guardians.
- Digital photograph, video or audio clips of individual pupils will not be published on the school website. Photographs video and audio clips will focus on group activities. Video clips may be password protected.
- Personal pupil information including names, home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will not publish the names of pupils in a photograph.

- The school will ensure that image files are appropriately names i.e. pupils names are not the image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

4.5   SCHOOL FACEBOOK PAGE
- Photographs of children will not be published without the written consent of parents/guardians.
- The schools Facebook page will not publish the names of pupils in a photograph.
- The school will not tolerate any form of bullying on the Facebook page.
- The school will not allow posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters between the school and members of its community.
- The school will not tolerate any comments or posts that are defamatory, rude or abusive towards any member of our school community, whether that be children, parents, staff or Board of Management.
- Where allowed by the site, the school welcome comments on the information posted. However, the school reserves the right to delete comments and ban further comments from anyone who breaks the terms of this policy.
- Children under the age of 13 should not join or post on this group in accordance with Facebook's Terms of Service. If a child under 13 is found posting on the school page the child will be blocked.

4.6   PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES
- 'Personal electronic devices' means any device that a pupil is in possession of which electronically communicates, sends, receives, stores, reproduces or displays voice and/or text communication or data. These include, but are not limited to mobile or smart phones, music and media players, gaming devices and tablets.
- Where a pupil brings such devices to school, it must be kept out of sight, switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities).
- Please refer to the 'Personal Electronic Devices: Acceptable Use Policy' for further clarification.

5.0   LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, pupils and parents/guardians should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

- Facebook's Terms of Service

6.0   SANCTIONS

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Appendix A

Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy Permission Form

Please review the attached 'Internet Acceptable Use Policy', sign and return this permission form to the principal.

School name: <u>BLESSINGTON EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL</u>

Name of Pupil: _____

Class / Year: _____

Pupil

I agree to follow the schools 'Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy' on the use of the Internet. 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 pupil, I have read the 'Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy' and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care 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 online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

I accept the above paragraph ☐ **I do not accept the above paragraph** ☐
(Please tick as appropriate)

In relation to the schools website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the 'Internet Acceptable Use Policy' relating to publishing children's work on the website (Section 2.4 of the Policy).

I accept the above paragraph ☐ **I do not accept the above paragraph** ☐
(Please tick as appropriate)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____ **Telephone:** _____

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