

8th February 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Since the beginning of this school year we have noticed that an increasing number of students are breaching the Acceptable Usage Policy of the school's computer and network systems.

This practice poses a risk as some students are attempting to bypass the firewall security measures that are in place. Whilst the systems in place for e-safety are current, robust and fit for purpose and in line with other schools in the local authority, attempting to bypass the firewall security exposes not only the individual student in question to risk, but all of our students and the school network to potentially dangerous online attacks.

The internet provides all students with a wealth of educational opportunities and resources, however students in this school, as with every other school in the UK and beyond, must adhere to security systems and the acceptable usage policies in place to protect them and others. At all times we must ensure the safety of our students, including when they are online. With this in mind, we would like to reaffirm the following:

- **Acceptable Usage Policy.** This Policy can be found in the student planners (page 12 for years 7-11 and page 13 for 6th form) which are issued to students on their first day of term. For your convenience a copy has been attached to this letter.
- The main sections from this Policy are also shown on the plasma screens around school and in the Sixth form area.
- Students **must not** bring any material in to school on USB storage devices as this is in breach of the Policy.
- Student log in details are confidential and are the responsibility of the assigned user. As such, they must not be shared with other students. Similarly, students must not leave themselves logged on a computer that is then left unattended irresponsibly. Logging on and off securely is standard practice in both the fields of education and employment. Students who fail to log off securely and responsibly pose an e-safety risk to themselves and others.
- Students who intentionally pass on their log on details to others will be dealt with swiftly and firmly as this represents a serious breach of the Acceptable Usage Policy.

Should a student be caught breaching the Acceptable Usage Policy they will be blocked, in the first instance, depending upon the severity, from using the internet for at least 1 week; for a second instance, the block will be for 1 month and for a third time the block may be for an indefinite period at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team in the interests of safety. Ultimately for repeated or severe violations your child would lose their place in school or the sixth form in line with behaviour policy as they would be a risk to themselves and others. Letters will be sent out to parents/carers at each occurrence explaining the situation and reminding them of the correct usage. This information will remain on a student's file and could impact upon applications to college, university and/or employment in the future. These measures are in line with other schools and educational establishments and have been formulated in consultation with external agencies.

For everyone's safety, we are sure you will appreciate that if students are detected attempting to bypass security we are duty bound to deal with this both swiftly and firmly as a school. In instances where students seek to access inappropriate material, or engage in inappropriate activity, which could constitute a Child Protection concern (eg inappropriate images/sexualised discussion in chat rooms) or indeed a Prevent concern (eg radicalisation/extremist websites/images) this will be reported to the Child Protection Team in school and, in the case of Prevent concerns to the Local Authority, which could result in an external investigation.

The World Wide Web is a powerful educational resource that can be transformational if used correctly and safely but we should all be aware of the inherent dangers that expose young people to risk. That is why we are reinforcing the message around e-safety for students, parents and carers as well as staff. We are confident that you will support us in ensuring the ICT facilities are used to facilitate and enhance learning but that they are used appropriately at all times in the best interests of all stakeholders.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support which is both valued and appreciated.

Yours faithfully



Graham Moffatt

Consultant Head Teacher