Internet Usage Agreement

FARMOR'S SCHOOL

The Use of Computers, Internet and Email at Farmor's School

Farmor's School is pleased to offer students access to a computer network for email and the Internet. It should be noted that the school does not accept liability for personal devices within school. To gain access to email and the internet, all students must obtain parental permission as verified by the signatures on the form attached.

What is possible?

Access to email and the internet will enable students to explore thousands of media rich websites and other repositories of information and to communicate with internet users around the world. Whilst the school has selected an Internet Service Provider (EXA networks) which attempts to filter out any unsuitable material, families should be aware that some material accessible via the internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. Although the aim of the school is to use internet resources for constructive educational goals, students may find ways to access other materials. We believe that the benefits to students of access to the internet in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages.

What is expected?

Students are responsible for appropriate behaviour on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behaviour and communications apply. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilising the school's computer resources. Use of personal equipment such as tablets and smart phones within the classroom is by prior agreement with the teacher. The students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

What are the rules?

Privacy – Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators may review communications to maintain system integrity and to ensure that students are using the system responsibly.

Storage capacity – Users are expected to remain within their allocated disk space and delete email or other material which take up excessive storage space.

Illegal copying – Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks. Nor should students copy other people's work or intrude into other people's workspace.

Inappropriate materials or language – Profane, abusive or impolite language should not be used to communicate, nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of school behaviour. Should students encounter such material by accident, they should report it to their teacher immediately.

Brief advice for students when using IT

These are guidelines to follow to prevent the loss of network privileges at school:

1. Use a computer in such a way so as not to harm other people or their work.
2. Respect computers and network devices just as any other school equipment.
3. Only use those programs that are already installed on the network - do not interfere with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, shareware, or freeware.
4. Copyright laws are there for a reason – don't break them.
5. Do not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.
6. Keep your password to yourself – don't share it with another person.
7. Only print out material when absolutely necessary. The School employs a print quota system, allocated for the printing of coursework. Additional print credit can be purchased for personal printing.
8. Only access your account – not anyone else's folders, work, or files.
9. Notify a teacher immediately, if by accident, you encounter materials which are against the rules of appropriate use.
10. Be prepared to be held accountable for your actions and for the loss of privileges if these rules are not complied with.

Social Media and Mobile Phones

We do not allow mobile phone use at Farmor's due to its potential to negatively impact on school life. Phones are allowed at school if they are turned off and in a student's bag or locker. Over the last few years social media activity has increasingly become an issue for all schools. Conversations that take

place over social media outside school can impact on behaviour and relationships in school and if so, we will take action in line with our behaviour policy.

The minimum age requirement for all social media sites is 13, however many children are circumventing this. Social media can be a powerful influence in a child's life and once children have access to it, they can be very unwilling to give it up. Some young people are on their phones all the time – in their room, on the bus, in bed at night, when they are eating, while you are trying to talk to them, and while they are trying to do their homework. Social media alerts can mean that they are living in a perpetual state of interruptions which impacts on their ability to concentrate and sleep.

Our experience is that, despite what they are told, some children will say and do things on-line that they would never do in the real world. This can have a serious impact on friendships, self-esteem, and personal safety. The majority of friendship issues the pastoral team deal with in years 7 to 10 stem from social media issues.

So, what can we do about this? In school, we have a programme of education about social media and internet use which we deliver in PSHCE lessons and assemblies. As parents and carers, we suggest that you regularly check what your child is doing online. Don't be afraid to restrict their access to the internet; make sure phones stay downstairs or ask for the phone to be handed in at an agreed time before bed. Talk to your child about their internet use and make sure that they are aware of the dangers associated with social media. For further information, www.childnet.com and www.saferinternet.org.uk has lots of advice for parents on the subject and explains how to set up parental controls.

There are apps which allow you to monitor how much screen time is used and limit app downloads. Here is a link to internetmatters.org which has a page containing information about these apps.

https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/monitoring-apps-parents-guide

Suggested guidelines

- Do talk to your child about what they do on their phone and which apps/websites they use
- Don't allow mobile phones in the bedroom after 9pm
- Be aware of the age limit of certain apps - are they older enough to sign-up to them?
- Set-up your own account so that you can monitor their activity
- Check what is on their phone