St Thomas the Apostle School & Sixth Form College

E-Safety Policy

Updated: January 2022

Agreed by Headteacher: January 2022

The School has a duty of care to provide a safe learning environment for students. This includes ensuring that children and young people are safe when using ICT.

Procedures

- All students are asked to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement and are encouraged to adopt safe and responsible use of ICT both within and outside school. Staff ensure that students, parents and carers have a complete understanding of the agreement before they sign.
- The school obtains signed permission from parents/carers to be able to use children's images in our publications, for example: photos of school productions, the website or school brochure images and the school newsletter.
- Where students are freely searching the Internet, staff are expected to be vigilant in monitoring the content of the websites the students visit.
- In lessons where internet use is pre-planned, students are guided to sites checked as suitable for their use. Any unsuitable material found in internet searches should be reported to the ICT team, who will block all users from accessing it in future.
- From time to time, for educational research, students may need to research topics (e.g. racism, drugs and discrimination) that would normally result in internet searches being blocked. In such a situation, staff can request that the ICT team temporarily remove those sites from the filtered list for the period of study.
- Students are aware that they must immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communications.
- Any digital communication between staff and students or parents/carers (email, chat VLE etc.) must be professional in tone and content.
- School staff should ensure that no reference should be made in social media to students, parents/carers or school staff.

Provision

- An E-safety curriculum is provided as part of ICT and PHSCE Dropdown Days: students are taught about E-safety issues, such as the risks attached to the sharing of personal details, cyberbullying, sharing inappropriate content and many other topics. They are also taught strategies to deal with inappropriate communications and are reminded of the need to communicate appropriately when using digital technologies.
- Key E-safety messages are re-enforced as part of a planned programme of assemblies
- Students are taught to be critically aware of the content they access online and be guided to validate the accuracy of information in subjects such as Humanities, English, ICT and Science.

- Staff are expected to act as good role models in their use of digital technologies, the Internet and mobile devices, for example, by making a clear distinction between private and professional use of social media.
- The School has provided literature for parents/carers regarding e-safety
- The activities referred to below are inappropriate, offensive and/or illegal and users should not engage in these activities in the school or outside the school when using the school's equipment or systems.

  The school policy restricts usages as follows:
  - All sites containing illegal material contrary to acts of parliament such as The Protection of Children Act 1978, Sexual Offences Act 2003, Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 and Public Order Act 1986.
  - Pornography.
  - Promotion of any kind of discrimination.
  - Threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm.
  - Any other information which may be offensive to the school community, inappropriate for students, or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute.
  - Using systems, application, website or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the School.
- The official School email service is regarded as safe and secure and is monitored. All students are made aware that email communications are monitored.
- The school uses up to date internet filtering system to ensure all students and staff are safe and unable to access inappropriate content. By default, illegal websites are blocked by RM SafetyNet based on input from the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), the Home Office, the Counter Terrorist list (CTIRU) and security intelligence, including radicalisation content.
- The school uses software called Smoothwall to monitor student and staff use of the Internet, which highlights any use that is deemed unacceptable or unsafe. All students and staff are made aware of this.

This E-Safety Policy has been approved and adopted by the Headteacher in January 2022 and will be reviewed in January 2023.

Signed by Headteacher [Eamon Connolly]: