



## READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL

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### Communications and Information Policy

#### Use of ICT, mobile phones and other electronic equipment for pupils.

##### ICT in the Curriculum

Technology has transformed the entire process of teaching and learning. It is a crucial component of every academic subject and is also taught as a subject in its own right. The school's classrooms are equipped with projectors and screens. The School has four ICT suites in the school and pupils may use the machines there and in the Library for private study. Members of the Sixth Form are required to bring a laptop or tablet to school to support their learning. They may use this device for academic study in study periods and as directed by their teachers in lessons. Some pupils (also in Years 7-11) may use a laptop in all lessons if this forms part of an Individual Learning Plan agreed by the Learning Support department. Devices should be locked away in pupils' lockers when they are not in use.

All our pupils are taught how to research on the internet and to evaluate sources. They are educated into the importance of evaluating the intellectual integrity of different websites and why some apparently authoritative sites need to be treated with caution. Some websites that appear to be serious, impartial, historical sites, actually masquerade as sources of racist, homophobic, jihadist or other propaganda. Some free, online encyclopaedias do not evaluate or screen the material posted on them.

##### The role of technology in our pupils' lives

Technology plays an enormously important part in the lives of all young people. Smart phones and devices such as games consoles provide unlimited access to the internet, to SMS messages, to blogging (web logging), to social media websites (like Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter), to Skype, to wikis (collaborative web pages), chat rooms and other social networking sites, and video sharing sites (such as YouTube).

##### Involvement with parents and guardians

RBCS seeks to work closely with parents and guardians in promoting a culture of e-safety. The school will always contact parents if it has any concerns about pupils' behaviour in this area and likewise it hopes that parents will feel able to share any concerns with the school. The school recognises that not all parents may feel equipped to protect their son or daughter when they use electronic equipment at home. The school therefore arranges regular discussion evenings for parents when they can hear advice about the potential hazards of this

exploding technology and the practical steps that parents can take to minimise the potential dangers to their sons and daughters without curbing their natural enthusiasm and curiosity.

## Charter for the safe use of the internet and electronic devices at RBCS

*“Children and young people need to be empowered to keep themselves safe – this isn't just about a top-down approach. Children will be children – pushing boundaries and taking risks. At a public swimming pool we have gates, put up signs, have lifeguards and shallow ends; but we also teach children how to swim”.*

Dr Tanya Byron “Safer Children in a digital world: the report of the Byron Review”.

E-safety is a whole school responsibility and at RBCS the staff and pupils have adopted the following charter for the safe use of the internet inside the school:

### Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying is a particularly pernicious form of bullying because it can be so pervasive and anonymous. There can be no safe haven for the victim who can be targeted at any time or place. The school's anti-bullying policy describes the preventative measures and the procedures that will be followed when the school discovers cases of bullying.
- Proper supervision of pupils plays an important part in creating a safe ICT environment at school but everyone needs to learn how to stay safe outside the school.
- RBCS values all of its pupils equally. It is part of the ethos of RBCS to promote considerate behaviour and to value diversity.
- Bullying and harassment in any form should always be reported to a member of staff. It is never the victim's fault, and he or she should not be afraid to come forward.

### Treating other users with respect

- The school expects pupils to treat staff and each other online with the same standards of consideration and good manners as they would in the course of face-to-face contact. They should always follow the school's rules (copies of which are printed in the pupils' planners).
- The school expects a degree of formality in communications between staff and pupils and would not normally expect them to communicate with each other by text or mobile phones. (The school's policy on educational visits explains the circumstances when communication by mobile phone may be appropriate.) In such circumstances when communication by mobile phone may be appropriate, staff use school, as opposed to personal, mobiles and pupils' mobile numbers are deleted at the end of the visit, and pupils are instructed to delete the staff number.
- Everyone has a right to feel secure and to be treated with respect, particularly the vulnerable. Harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and this is made clear in the school's anti-bullying policy. The school is strongly committed to promoting equal opportunities for all, regardless of race, gender, gender orientation or physical disability.

- All pupils are encouraged to look after each other and to report any concerns about the misuse of technology or worrying issues to a member of the pastoral staff.
- The use of cameras on mobile phones is not allowed in toilets and changing areas.

## Keeping the School Network safe

- The school adheres to best practice regarding e-teaching and the internet.
- Certain sites are blocked by the school's filtering system and the school's IT department monitors pupils' use of the network.
- The IT department monitors email traffic and blocks SPAM and certain attachments.
- The school issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access is via personal LOGIN, which is password protected. The school gives guidance on the reasons for always logging off and for keeping all passwords securely.
- The school has strong anti-virus protection on its network which is operated by the IT department.
- Pupils and visitors can access the school's wireless network via the Guest network. Usage of this network is monitored by the school's IT department and it is controlled by the school's filtering system.

## Promoting Safe Use of Technology

The whole school takes part in regular initiatives which promote the safe use of technology. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to make use of the excellent online resources that are available from sites such as:

- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (<http://www.education.gov.uk/ukccis>)
- Childnet International ([www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org))
- Cyber Mentors ([www.cybermentors.org.uk](http://www.cybermentors.org.uk))
- Cyberbullying ([www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org))
- E-victims ([www.e-victims.org](http://www.e-victims.org))
- Bullying UK ([www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk))

They prepare their own models of good practice which form the subject of presentations during assemblies and discussion in the meetings of the school council. They cover the different hazards on the internet, such as grooming, stalking, abuse, bullying, harassment and identity theft. Guidance covers topics such as saving oneself from future embarrassment explaining that any blog or photograph posted onto the internet is there permanently. Anything that has been deleted may be cached in a search engine, company server or internet archive and cause embarrassment years later.

## Safe Use of Personal Electronic Equipment

- The school's guidance is that pupils and staff should always think carefully before they post any information online. Content posted should not be

able to be deemed inappropriate or offensive, or likely to cause embarrassment to the individual or others.

- The school offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons which covers blocking and removing contacts from 'friend lists'.
- The school's PSHE lessons include guidance on how pupils can identify the signs of cyberstalking and what they should do if they are worried about being harassed or stalked online.
- The school offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe. Privacy is essential in the e-world.
- The school gives guidance on how to keep safe at home by encrypting the home wireless network, not opening unknown attachments and reporting any illegal content.
- Similarly the school covers how a mobile phone filter can be activated and how to block nuisance callers.

## Considerate Use of Electronic Equipment

- Mobile phones and other personal electronic devices should be switched off and stored securely during the school day. They may be used during break-times and lunch-times in Common Rooms as authorised by Heads of Year.
- Staff may confiscate personal equipment that is being used during the school day. Confiscated items are taken to the secretaries' office in the Messer building. They can be collected at the end of the school day.
- Sanctions may be imposed on pupils who use their electronic equipment without consideration for others and if serious parents would be advised in writing of the sanction taken.

RBCS expects all pupils to adhere to this charter for the safe use of the internet. This policy is made available to all pupils and their parents and the school may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet, mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Pupils and parents are also encouraged to read the school's guidance on its Bring Your Own Device Policy (appendix 1).

A condensed Code of Conduct relating to the safe use of the internet and cyber-bullying is made available to pupils and published in Computer Suites (appendix 2)

Author(s):	PDW
Date:	January 2017
Review Frequency:	Annually
Next Review Date:	January 2018
References:	• Internet Safety Policy
Governor:	Mrs Elaine Morgan
Date of Governor Agreement:	

