

Acceptable Use Policy



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Reviewed on		

This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors and anyone using Earley Springs devices or networks.

Data Protection and GDPR Compliance

Earley Springs is committed to ensuring that all data processing activities, including the use of the internet and ICT systems, comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. All data, including personal data collected, accessed, or processed, will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Personal data, including student and staff information, must not be shared without proper authorisation. All users are expected to protect the privacy of personal data and report any data breaches to the Data Protection Officer immediately.

- All internet use that involves the collection or processing of personal data must adhere to GDPR principles, including data minimisation, purpose limitation, and data security.
- All users must not attempt to bypass filtering, monitoring or security settings.
- Only school-approved devices and platforms may be used.
- Users must follow password requirements (strong passwords, never shared).
- Portable devices must be encrypted where relevant.
- All cyber security incidents or data breaches must be reported immediately to the DSL and DPO.

Staff and Students

Earley Springs internet access has been designed for student use and includes a level of filtering appropriate to the age of students.

Students will be taught what is deemed as acceptable and unacceptable and given clear objectives for internet use.

Internet access will be planned to enrich and extend learning activities. Access levels will be reviewed to reflect the curriculum requirements and age of students.

Staff should guide students in online activities that will support the learning outcomes planned for the students' age and maturity.

Students will be educated in the effective use of the internet in research, e-communication, and e-learning.

When using the internet, all users must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination, and obscenity laws. All school staff (both teachers and support staff) are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with the rules of behaviour governing employees in the education sector.

Students are responsible for their good behaviour on Earley Springs networks, just as they are when on and off school premises. While the use of information and communication technologies is a required aspect of the statutory curriculum, access to the Internet is a privilege, not a right. It is given to students who act in a considerate and responsible manner and will be withdrawn if they fail to maintain acceptable standards of use.

Staff should ensure that students know and understand that no internet user is permitted to:

- Retrieve, send, copy, or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Use obscene or racist language.
- Harass, insult, or attack others.
- Damage computers, computer systems, or computer networks.
- Violate copyright laws.
- Trespass in another user's folders, work, or files; intentionally waste resources (such as online time and consumables); use the network for unapproved commercial purposes.

Online safety is an integral part of safeguarding at Earley Springs, and our approach fully aligns with the statutory requirements set out in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*. All staff have a responsibility to promote safe and responsible use of technology and must follow the online safety expectations outlined in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. This ensures that online risks are identified, addressed, and managed consistently across our provision, supporting the safety and wellbeing of every pupil.

Location and Supervision

Earley Springs will provide, through an Internet Service Provider, a filtered service. All users should be aware that Earley Springs School can and does track and record the sites visited, the searches made on the internet, and e-mail sent and received by individual users.

Earley Springs uses filtering and monitoring systems that meet the Department for Education's current standards for online safety. These systems help ensure that pupils are protected from harmful or inappropriate content while accessing the internet for educational purposes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for overseeing and responding to any alerts raised through monitoring systems, while the school's IT provider or technical lead maintains and updates the filtering and monitoring tools to ensure they remain secure, effective and appropriate for the needs of our pupils.

All online safety concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. Any accidental access to inappropriate or concerning material must also be reported without delay so the incident can be recorded, addressed and prevented from reoccurring. Prompt reporting helps safeguard pupils and ensures appropriate action is taken.

Internet access for students will be available on all school IT equipment; however, this should be in full view of everyone circulating in the area.

While using the internet at school, students should, where possible, be supervised. However, when appropriate, students may pursue electronic research independent of staff supervision if they have been granted permission. In all cases, students should be reminded of their responsibility to use these resources in line with Earley Springs' policy on acceptable use.

Earley Springs will endeavour to ensure that all students understand how they are to use the internet appropriately and why the rules exist.

Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Use

Online activities which are encouraged include, use of the Internet to investigate and research school subjects, cross-curricular themes, and topics related to social and personal development; use of the Internet to investigate careers and further and higher education; the development of students' competence in ICT skills and their general research skills.

Online activities which are not permitted include, for example:

- Searching, viewing, and/or retrieving materials that are not related to the aims of the curriculum or future careers.
- Copying, saving, and/or redistributing copyright protected material, without approval.
- Playing computer games.
- Publishing, sharing, or distributing any personal information about a user (such as home address, email address, phone number, etc.).
- Any activity that violates a school rule.

Internet access must be appropriate for all members of Earley Springs community, from the youngest student to the teacher and administrative staff. Systems to adapt the access profile to suit the student's age and learning context are available. Older secondary students, as part of a supervised project, might need to access adult materials. For instance, a course text or literary novel might include references to sensitive subjects.

Teachers may need to research areas including drugs, medical conditions, bullying, racism, or harassment. In such cases, legitimate use will be recognised, and restrictions can be removed temporarily upon request.

Staff must only use school-approved devices when taking photographs, videos or recordings of pupils and must do so in line with the school's safeguarding and data protection requirements. Personal mobile phones must not be used around pupils unless specific authorisation has been granted by senior leadership. Students may only use electronic devices under staff supervision and solely for educational purposes that support and enhance their learning.

Responsible Internet Use Rules for Staff and Students

The Earley Springs computer system provides internet access to students and staff. This Responsible Internet Use statement will help protect students, staff, and Earley Springs School by clearly stating what is acceptable and what is not.

- Access must only be made via the user's authorised account, and if password protected, it must not be shared with any other person.
- School computer and internet use must be appropriate to the student's education or to staff professional activity.
- Copyright and intellectual property rights must be respected.
- Students do not have authorisation to use email in school.
- Anonymous messages and chain letters must not be sent.
- The use of public chat rooms is not permitted.
- Use for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes, or advertising is forbidden.
- The security of ICT systems must not be compromised, whether owned by Earley Springs or by other organisations or individuals.
- Irresponsible use will result in the loss of network access.
- Individual user's Internet access may be monitored, including Web and e-mail use. Files on Earley Springs system may be examined or deleted.

Remote learning and online communication must only take place through school-approved platforms that meet safeguarding and data protection expectations. Staff must ensure that any online teaching or virtual communication is conducted in a professional, secure and appropriate manner, following the same safeguarding expectations that apply to face-to-face interactions. This includes maintaining appropriate conduct, communication boundaries and an environment that protects pupils' privacy and wellbeing.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the proprietor board to ensure that it remains accurate, up to date and fully compliant with statutory guidance, including Department for Education expectations and the Independent School Standards. Amendments will be made as required to reflect changes in legislation, technology or safeguarding requirements.

This policy will be made available to parents and carers on request and via the school website to ensure transparency and shared understanding of the school's expectations for safe and responsible internet use. Acceptable Use Agreements will be issued annually to pupils (where appropriate), parents and staff, and must be signed each year to confirm that all parties understand and agree to the principles outlined in this policy.