ICT Policy European School Karlsruhe

The school recognises that the digital world brings both risks and opportunities for young people, and that risk is not automatically a bad thing as it gives children a chance to learn how to cope and become resilient. It is only by understanding and balancing these aspects that the school and parents are able to give children the practical help they need to get the best from the internet and other online activity which is today an integral part of life.

Pupils using a school's ICT resources, during or outside lessons, are assisted solely by the school's teachers, educational advisers or other appropriate supervisory staff. They are under an obligation to show due care and attention when using the equipment made available to them and must follow the safety/security instructions issued by the school.

All safety/security instructions are displayed in a prominent place in every room where there are computers situated or there is internet access. These instructions are in the 3 vehicular languages of the school: German, French and English (Annex 1).

Pupils will be instructed in use of the internet for information and research in the most appropriate way in their normal timetabled lessons.

Online content comes without any quality assurance from a reputable publisher or editor. At ESK students will be encouraged and taught to develop information literacy skills and behave in a more discriminating manner when online. Elements are built into ICT-lessons about eSafety in order to instruct pupils about how to make a good use of the technology and avoid possible problems while using the new technologies.

Safety on the Internet

Risks exist wherever we are – at school or home, in the shopping centre, in the playground, or on the internet. They are, however, increased in the online environment by the fact that one cannot usually see who we are communicating with and probably do not know who has provided the data we are accessing.

Personal Problems encountered when using the Internet could include:

- Bullying & Cyber bullying in blogs, forums, social networks and via mobile phones
- Dangerous contacts on Chat lines
- Child Pornography and other age-inappropriate content such as violence
- Exposure to Online Gaming - Gambling
- Racism on the Internet

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the Internet or other digital technologies. It has various forms, including direct harassment and indirect anti-social activities that are intended to damage the reputation or interfere with the relationships of the person targeted, such as posting harmful material, impersonating the person, disseminating personal information or images, or activities that result in exclusion from a person's social group.

ESK is committed to dealing with instances of cyber bullying occurring through use of the Internet system or use of personal digital devices, such as mobile phones, digital cameras, personal computers, and PDAs, while at and away from school.

Cyber bullying and other misuse of the Internet system and personal digital devices on campus will be addressed by the school immediately it becomes aware of such activities.

Cyber bullying activities occurring at school and off-campus cause significant emotional harm. When students are emotionally harmed they may present a danger to themselves and to others. The school will respond to these situations as soon as they are aware of them to minimize the risk to individuals and to avoid having to respond to incidences at a more serious level ("school failure," "school violence"or"student suicide" level).

The school will refer to the legal position in BW on a case by case basis to appropriate a balance between student free speech rights and the school interests in ensuring student safety (Annex 2)

The school will incorporate all recommended prevention and education strategies* to endeavor to prevent cyber bullying and reduce related online risks. The parents are responsible for informing themselves of the issues.

The ICT planning activities will involve school employees, law enforcement, community organizations, parents, and students where appropriate.

* Please refer to the ICT rules and regulations

School procedures

As soon as the school is aware of any bullying activity, it will endeavor to ensure -
  • that harmful material is removed immediately,
  • the harmful activities cease,
  • retaliation by the student or by others at the student's request does not occur.

The school reserves the right to deal with any incident on a case by case basis and in a way that they feel is most appropriate to ensure the best possible outcome for all concerned.
As a guideline, the school will -
  • confiscate the digital device and withhold it until the end of the school day. Parents will be informed immediately that this has taken place.
  • if possible, provide the parents of the cyber bully with a downloaded copy of the harmful online material; however this material must remain confidential to minimize the risk of further harm to the victim.
  • advise the parents of their potential personal liability if they do not take proactive steps together with the school to ensure the harmful activities cease.
  • propose and supervise a programme of help and support for both the bully and the victim

- instigate a meeting between all parties involved, in a forum that is chosen by the victim, in order to resolve the situation through dialogue; or alternatively through extra class discussions.

If appropriate and at the Director's discretion, the imposition of a formal disciplinary response, such as suspension, or the notification of the local authorities may take place.

The school will seek to intervene early and informally, rather than to wait until such time that the standard of offensive material has increased to an unacceptable level.

The school will take immediate action when any act that takes place on or adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop, with the use of the Internet system or use of a personal digital device, that causes or threatens to cause substantial and material disruption at school or interference with the students' rights of security.

Other areas of risk

ESK will also take into consideration other areas of risk that directly impacts pupils'
well-being. The most significant additional issues of concern include:
- Unsafe online communities that are promoting cutting, anorexia, and suicide.
- Dangerous online groups, including hate groups and gangs.
- Risky online sexual activities, that range from posting sexually provocative material, to arranging for sexual "hook-ups," to involvement with online sexual predators.
- "sexting" ie, the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs, primarily between mobile phones.

The school will encourage students to have a "computer-smart" approach when using the internet so that they are aware that personal messages, video and photos could be maliciously used by others in bullying, harassment, violation of privacy, violation of identity, unsolicited attention and other socially unacceptable behavior.

Awareness and prevention

The school, in co-operation with parents and the Parents Association will endeavor to educate students about how to avoid and to respond to cyber bulling situations and educate parents, through regular timetabled lessons, information evenings and workshop sessions, on strategies to ensure their child does not engage in such harmful online activity.

The school will ensure that pupils and parents are aware that any member of staff may be approached if the need arises, and that all staff are aware of the appropriate school procedures for such matters.

Policy reviews
This policy will be reviewed at least once a year by appropriate ESK personnel to ensure that the information remains relevant.

Please also include the name and contact details of a member of staff who can be approached in confidence should a pupil or parent wishes to do so.