



PONTEFRACT
ACADEMIES TRUST

Acceptable Use Policy – Pupils, Parents & Carers



Summary:

This policy sets guidelines and rules on the use of ICT resources for pupils, parents, and carers across the Trust.

Author	Lead Governance Officer		
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Document Control

Date	Version	Action	Amendments
February 2025	1.0	New policy	New pupils/carers policy based on Veritau model.

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1. Introduction and scope

Most of us use digital technologies every day, both within and outside school. These technologies can help education and development by promoting creativity, curiosity, and an engagement with the wider world. With an awareness of the risks involved, students should have safe access to these digital technologies and the opportunities they provide.

This Acceptable Use policy outlines what is expected of students when using the Trust's network and related technologies, to maintain the safety and security of the systems and other users.

This applies to the Trust's computers, devices such as laptops and tablets, personal devices such as mobile phones, and any activity that makes use of computer networks, such as Wi-Fi.

2. Using computer accounts and the internet

The Trust provides students with an email account and use of the internet for educational purposes.

Personal use

Trust email accounts should be used for educational purposes, or linked to the school setting.

Inappropriate use

The Trust does not permit students to send emails or use the internet in any way that could be insulting, disruptive, or offensive to someone else. Material not allowed includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexually explicit messages, images, cartoons, jokes or movie files
- Profanity, obscenity, slander or libel
- Ethnic, religious or racial slurs
- Any content that could be seen as bullying or belittling of others based on their sex, gender, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious or philosophical beliefs, or political beliefs

Students are also not permitted to use the internet in a way which could affect usage for others. This means not downloading software, streaming or downloading media files such as music or films, and not using the internet for playing online games.

Students must also be aware of copyright restrictions when using the internet. Students are not permitted to use materials in ways that would infringe intellectual property laws, including copyright. This means you should be careful when reusing online materials and content.

3. Online security

Students will take care to use their accounts with information security in mind. Students will:

- Not click on links from un-trusted or unverified sources in emails or on web pages
- Keep passwords unique, private and not share these with others

- Log out when you are finished or lock your account when away from the computer
- Not sign up to marketing material that could jeopardise the school's IT network
- Not send very large files without authorisation from a member of staff

4. Monitoring

To support and protect students and staff, the Trust may monitor students' use of the computer network, including:

- Checking and reviewing all email traffic
- Monitoring internet activity
- Using e-monitoring software that blocks banned content, monitors internet use and can alert the school if it seems there is a safeguarding concern or inappropriate use

Under the Education Act 2011, and in line with the Department for Education's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, schools have the right to search pupils' phones, computers or other devices for pornographic images or any other data or items banned under school rules or legislation.

The school can, and will, delete files and data found on searched devices if we believe the data or file has been, or could be, used to disrupt teaching or break the school's rules. Staff members may also confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the police, if necessary.

Please refer to the [DfE Searching, Screen and Confiscation advice for schools](#) and the Trust's Behaviour and Relationships Policy and Procedural Instructions for further information about the use of screening, searching and confiscation.

5. Social media use

Using social media during school hours is not permitted.

Students should not use social media in a way which violates the privacy or dignity of other users, including staff, students and other members of the wider community.

6. Remote learning and remote access

If the school uses remote learning, students may engage in more online activities than usual and be provided with accounts for more services.

All the expectations above apply when students access school accounts from home, such as when completing home learning or in the event of remote classrooms. When learning from home, students should also consider:

- Not leaving drinks or food near schoolwork, computer or devices – if it spills it could destroy work or equipment
- Only using appropriate methods to contact teachers, such as using designated school email accounts

- Remember that the school's behaviour policy and classroom expectations still apply to virtual classrooms.

7. Safe use of online services

In addition to the safe applications provided by the school for your educational use, students should take care when using online services independently. Some online services are paid for, and others are free at the point of use, but are funded by advertisements. These are used at the individual's request and risk of the user.

Online services may include:

- Apps
- Games
- Social media
- Streaming services
- Anything that offers goods and services

Students are strictly prohibited from accessing gambling sites or apps during school.

When using the internet, both within and outside school, students should be particularly mindful of protecting their personal information and safety. Before using any online service, students should consider whether the service:

- Is age appropriate
- Uses child-friendly language and methods of communication
- Has high privacy settings in place by default, e.g. private rather than public profiles
- Has privacy and safety options such as blocking and reporting
- Allows you to set the user age
- Has location tracking switched off by default

Using age-appropriate services will help protect and promote your best interests.

8. Consequences of inappropriate use

Inappropriate use may result in sanctions in line with the Trust's Behaviour policy. If you misuse the computer network and related devices, the school may:

- Remove your access to the internet or network account
- Temporarily ban you from using school equipment
- Confiscate your personal device(s)
- Contact your parents
- Take further action in accordance with Trust's Behaviour policy, as appropriate

9. Parents and carers

Access to ICT facilities and materials

Parents do not have access to the school's ICT facilities as a matter of course. However, parents working for, or with the school in an official capacity (for instance, as a volunteer or as a member of a PTA (Parent & Teacher Association) or SPRB (School Performance Review Board) may be granted an appropriate level of access or be permitted to use the Trust's facilities at the headteacher or Executive Leadership Team's discretion.

Where parents are granted access in this way, they must abide by the Acceptable Use – Workforce Policy.

Communicating with or about the school online

We believe it is important to model for pupils, and help them learn how to communicate respectfully with, and about, others online. Parents play a vital role in helping model this behaviour for their children, especially when communicating with the school and/or Trust through our website and social media channels.

We ask parents to abide by the content of Appendix A.

Appendix A: Acceptable use agreement for parents and carers

Online channels are an important way for parents/carers to communicate with, or about, your school and Trust. The Trust uses the following channels:

- Our official X (previously Twitter) pages.
- Our official LinkedIn page.
- DoJo/MCAS/Classcharts, Tapestry, text, email.

Parents/carers may also set up independent channels to help them stay on top of what's happening in their child's class/school. For example, class/year Facebook groups, email groups, or chats (through apps such as WhatsApp).

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, we expect that parents will:

- Be respectful towards members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful of other parents/carers and children
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

We expect that parents will not:

- Use private groups, the school's Twitter/LinkedIn pages, or personal social media to complain about or criticise members of staff. This is not constructive, and the school can't improve or address issues if they are not raised in an appropriate way.
- Use private groups, the school's Twitter/LinkedIn pages, or personal social media to complain about, or try to resolve, a behaviour issue involving other pupils. We expect you to contact the school and speak to the appropriate member of staff if you are aware of a specific behaviour issue or incident.
- Upload or share photos or videos on social media of any child other than my own, unless they have the permission of other children's parents/carers.