**St Mary’s C of E School**

**School Filtering Policy**



**Date reviewed: July 2015**

**Signed: Headteacher:**

**Signed Chair of governors:**

**Date for next review:**

**Rationale for the policy**

ICT 4 provides a filtered broadband service to the school with cloudwebfiltering.com.

The filtering service follows the recommended guidance and restrictions set by SWGfL (South West Grid for Learning) and the Policy can be found at: **www.swgfl.org.uk/safety/default.asp**. This service is intended to prevent users accessing material that would be regarded as illegal and / or inappropriate in an educational environment, as defined in the Filtering Policy. Because the content on the web changes dynamically and new technologies are constantly being developed, it is not possible for any filtering service to be 100% effective. It is important, therefore, to understand that filtering is only one element in a larger strategy for e-safety and acceptable use.

The cloudweb filtering service provides flexibility for schools to decide on their own levels of filtering security. It is possible to add to or override some of the sites filtered by SWGfL and have different levels of filtering for staff and students. Users Internet activity is monitored through the cloudweb filtering service and reports are produced and analysed at e-safety committee meetings.

As the use of the Internet becomes more widespread, access becomes available through a wider range of technologies and users become more sophisticated in their Internet use, schools need to continually review their filtering and monitoring policies.

This policy links with the school aim of:

* Provide a secure environment, physically and emotionally, in which all children are offered equal opportunities and are taught to value their own skills and abilities and those of others.
* Provide a broad and balanced curriculum within a variety of learning environments that develop individual potential.

**Introduction to the policy**

The filtering of Internet content provides an important means of preventing users from accessing material that is illegal or is inappropriate in an educational context. The filtering system cannot, however, provide a 100% guarantee that it will do so. It is therefore important that the school has a filtering policy to manage the associated risks and to provide preventative measures which are relevant to the situation in this school.

**Responsibilities**

The responsibility for the management of the school’s filtering policy will be held by the school ICT co-ordinator, Mr Daniel King. He will manage the school filtering, in line with this policy and will keep records / logs of changes and of breaches of the filtering systems.

31

To ensure that there is a system of checks and balances and to protect those responsible, changes to the school filtering service must:

* **be logged in change control logs.**
* **be reported to a second responsible person - the Head Teacher.**
* **be reported to and authorised by a second responsible person prior to changes being****made.**

All users have a responsibility to report immediately to the ICT co-ordinator or head teacher any infringements of the school’s filtering policy of which they become aware or any sites that are accessed, which they believe should have been filtered.

Users must not attempt to use any programmes or software that might allow them to bypass the filtering systems in place to prevent access to such materials.

**Education / Training / Awareness**

Pupils will be made aware of the importance of filtering systems through the e-safety education programme and the signing of AUPs at the beginning of each year. They will also be warned of the consequences of attempting to subvert the filtering system through the Pupil sanction policy.

Staff users will be made aware of the filtering systems through:

* *signing the AUP*
* *induction training*
* *staff meetings, briefings, INSET.*

Parents will be informed of the school’s filtering policy through the Acceptable Use agreement and through e-safety awareness sessions. The policy will be available on the school website.

**Changes to the Filtering System**

Request to change any aspect of the filtering should be made in the first instance to the ICT co-ordinator, Mr Daniel King. The ICT co-ordinator will consult the head teacher and a decision to allow or deny changes will be made.

* The grounds on which they may be allowed or denied will be made clear to all staff. Strong educational reasons will guide any changes agreed.
* The head teacher will be involved in all proposed changes to provide checks and balances at the time of request and before any changes are made.
* Changes to the filtering system will be logged and regularly reviewed by the head teacher and the e-safety committee.

Users who gain access to, or have knowledge of others being able to access, sites which they feel should be filtered (or unfiltered) should report this in the first instance to the I.C.T. co-ordinator who will decide in consultation with the head teacher, whether to make school level changes (as above). If it is felt that the site should be filtered (or unfiltered) at school level, a responsible person (the ICT co-ordinator or ICT technician) will make changes to Internet filter.

32

**Monitoring**

No filtering system can guarantee 100% protection against access to unsuitable sites. The school will therefore monitor the activities of users on the school network and on school equipment as indicated in the School E-Safety Policy and the Acceptable Use agreement. Monitoring will take place as follows:

* Regular reports from the network manager (ICT4) on activities of staff and pupils.

**Audit / Reporting**

* Logs of filtering change controls and of filtering incidents will be made available to:
* the second responsible person (the head teacher)
* E-Safety Committee
* E-Safety Governor
* SWGfL / Local Authority on request

The filtering policy will be reviewed in the response to the evidence provided by the audit logs of the suitability of the current provision. (The evidence might show a large number of requests to remove the filtering from sites – in which case schools might question whether their current level of filtering is too restrictive for educational purposes. Alternatively, a large number of incidents where users try to subvert the filtering system might suggest that improved monitoring / disciplinary action might be necessary).

Date on which policy was approved: May 2013

Policy review date: July 2015