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ICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

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Purpose

This policy governs the appropriate and responsible use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources by staff and students within Department for Education (DfE) sites. The policy ensures compliance with departmental standards, fosters a safe learning environment, and aims to prevent misuse.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff (academic and administrative) employed within DfE schools.
- All students enrolled at any DfE site.
- Visitors, contractors, and external personnel granted access to DfE ICT systems.

Policy Details

1. General Acceptable Use Guidelines

1. ICT resources (e.g., computers, devices, networks, software) must be used for educational or departmental work-related purposes only.
2. Usage of ICT facilities must not:
    - Violate laws, copyright, or licensing agreements.
    - Be considered personal commercial gain or unauthorised activity.
    - Contain offensive, illegal, or inappropriate material as outlined in departmental guidelines.
3. Appropriate language and conduct must be maintained at all times in virtual communications and online activities.

2. User Responsibilities

Staff responsibilities:

- Staff are accountable for actions associated with their accounts and must familiarise themselves with relevant departmental ICT policies.
- Ensure all passwords and user credentials remain confidential and are not shared.
- Report theft, loss, or unauthorised access to equipment or accounts immediately to the ICT Service Desk.
- Avoid installing unauthorised or unlicensed software or devices on departmental systems.

Student responsibilities:

- Students must seek permission before accessing ICT systems.
- Follow instructions for using devices and networks responsibly.
- Avoid accessing or attempting to bypass filters or security settings.
- Report inappropriate use or cyber safety concerns to a teacher or site leader.

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3. Security and Privacy

- Passwords must be strong, unique, and regularly updated. Sharing passwords is prohibited.
- All usage records (including websites accessed, emails sent, and data interactions) may be monitored for security purposes in compliance with applicable laws.
- Personal use of departmental ICT resources must be minimal and not compromise system security.

4. Maintenance and Reporting

- ICT equipment (like laptops and tablets) must be maintained securely by each user.
- Lost, stolen, or compromised devices must be reported to the ICT Service Desk/administration immediately to enable remote wiping if required.

5. Agreements

Acknowledgement forms:

- Staff are required to sign the ICT Acceptable Use Acknowledgement form before receiving user credentials.
- Students, along with their parents or guardians, must sign an ICT Acceptable Use Agreement every year, acknowledging their understanding and acceptance of this policy.

6. Consequences of Misuse

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Loss of ICT access privileges.
- Disciplinary action for staff (up to termination) or for students (up to suspension or expulsion).
- Severe breaches (e.g., illegal activity, breach of privacy) may be referred to law enforcement agencies.

Supporting Documents

1. ICT Cyber Security Standard
2. Mobile Communication Devices Procedure

Review

This policy is to be reviewed annually by site ICT leaders and updated as required to reflect changes in departmental guidelines or technology advancements.