Pupil Acceptable Use of IT & Digital Technologies Policy

Bancroft's

Independent Co-educational Day School 7–18

Social Media and Networking Guidelines for Pupils

Bancroft's School recognises that the use of ICT (information and communication technology) can enhance the students' learning experience, but also that it can introduce some risks. To help our student community manage those risks, we have a program of education for students and staff, and we also provide information for parents.

Mobile phone regulations can be found in the School's Rules and Procedures. Mobile phones should be in lockers between 8.20am and 3.45pm in Years 7 to 11 (with some exceptions, for example, in some GCSE Art, Drama and DTE lessons under the direction of teachers). Sixth formers may keep phones with them and use them in designated areas such as the Sixth Form area.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

• Safeguard all pupils and promote well-being;

• Ensure users are not exposed to risk because of their actions;

• Use social media in a respectful, positive, and productive way which respects all parties involved;

• Ensure that the reputation of Bancroft's School (the School), its staff and governors is protected and that stakeholders understand their ambassadorial role regarding the School;

• Protect the School from legal risks;

• Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the School.

These guidelines apply to the use of social media for both school and personal purposes, whether during school hours or otherwise, and regardless of whether the social media is accessed using school IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to pupils, or any other IT/internet enabled equipment.

All pupils must read, understand, and digitally sign the Pupil Acceptable Use of IT & Digital Technologies Policy Policy (previously the E-Citizen Charter) below.

Rationale

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new, relevant, and exciting ways. It is important that we can use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with duties to the School, the community, our legal responsibilities, and our reputation.

The guidance in this document aims to provide a balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. Even though the online space differs in many ways, the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and everyone should be treated with kindness, respect, and dignity.

Use of social media in practice for pupils

1) Pupils' use of social media on any School IT systems, School managed laptops or tablets and School IT accounts accessed at any time (including during online learning) and equipment/devices and any personal devices (including handheld devices, watches or any other internet enabled device) brought on to the School site or at a School activity, must comply with the School's Online Safety and Pupil Acceptable Use of IT Policy (E Charter).

2) Pupils should not access any social media that is for adults only or if the pupil does not meet the minimum age requirement.

3) Anonymous sites should not be accessed as there is a substantial risk that inappropriate comments can be exchanged, causing distress or endangerment.

4) Offensive, explicit, or abusive language and inappropriate pictures must never be included in messages.

5) The malicious manipulation of images (e.g. to create deep fake videos or images) is strictly forbidden and will result in a serious disciplinary sanction.

6) All messages should be positive and not include anything that could be upsetting or defamatory towards others or the School.

7) Pupils must take responsibility for keeping details of their accounts private, using full privacy settings, logging off properly and not allowing others to use their accounts.

8) All online interactions must be appropriate - using a non-identifiable account may never be used to excuse unacceptable online behaviour and interactions within the Bancroft's and wider community. Online interactions with staff within the Bancroft's community must be conducted using a Bancroft's school email account.

9) Pupils must report anything offensive or upsetting that they see online to the appropriate bodies, either by using the "report abuse" tabs or by speaking to their parents or a member of staff.

10) It is a serious offence to use another person's account, or to create an account in another person's name without their consent.

11) Pupils should not regard anything posted online as private and should remember that harassment, defamatory attitudes, and racism are just some issues which could lead to prosecution.

12) An individual's "Digital Footprint" is becoming increasingly significant when it comes to job and university applications. If unfortunate decisions are made, it will be extremely difficult, perhaps impossible, to eliminate the evidence.

13) If pupils see inappropriate postings by other pupils, they must inform the School so that steps can be taken to avoid repercussions.

14) The Malicious Communications Act applies to social media interaction by pupils, staff, and parents of the School.

15) Pupils should be aware of the "Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms" which is referred to during ICT as well as Learning for Life and assemblies.

16) Pupils must have permission from the relevant Head or Head of Department for any social media accounts using the name of Bancroft's, a Bancroft's logo, or clearly attached to Bancroft's School in some way. The Head of Marketing should be engaged to provide advice on the use if hashtags and branding.

17) When using IT and artificial intelligence (AI) tools in academic work, it is important to act with honesty and integrity. AI can be helpful for learning and research, but it should not be used to complete assignments or exams on your behalf. Pupils must ensure that all work submitted is their own and properly acknowledges any assistance or sources used, including AI-generated content. Misusing AI to cheat or plagiarise undermines learning and can lead to serious consequences. Technology should be used responsibly and in and follow the school's guidelines to support fair and honest academic progress.

Bancroft's Pupil Acceptable Use of IT & Digital Technologies Charter

To help reinforce the guidelines for safe, responsible and effective use of digital technology, this charter outlines how pupils are expected to behave when using school-owned or personal devices on the school site or during school activities, whether connected to the school Wi-Fi or not. Pupils are asked to sign this on joining the School and review it regularly.

1. Respectful Communication & Online Conduct

1. I will not say anything to or about someone online that I would not say to them in person.
2. I will not post anonymously or hide behind fake accounts – I am responsible for what I write.
3. I will not post, send, or forward anything that may cause upset, offence, or distress to others.
4. I will not manipulate images of others in a way that could cause harm or embarrassment.
5. I understand that content shared online is difficult to retract and can have lasting consequences.
6. I will not post anything that may bring reputational harm to the School or its community, including wearing school uniform in inappropriate contexts or sharing images of the school site.
7. I will respect others' privacy and will not share or post their personal information without their permission.
8. I will ensure that I have consent before posting or sending photos or videos that include others, and if filming on private property, I will seek the property owner's permission.

2. Responsibility to Others

9. If I see something inappropriate or upsetting online, I will report it immediately to an adult or via the anonymous Call it Out platform. I understand that my failure to do so may result in a serious disciplinary sanction.
10. I accept that I have a duty of care to report incidents of cyberbullying. Being a passive bystander may result in sanctions.
11. I understand that the School will inform my parents if they are concerned about my online behaviour or wellbeing.
12. I understand that my parents have been advised to monitor my use of social media.

3. Use of Social Media & Devices

13. I will review the terms and conditions (including age limits) of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and YouTube.
14. I understand that the School has the right to search my personal device where there are reasonable grounds to do so. (See FAQ 9 for details.)

4. Academic Integrity & Acceptable Use of AI

15. I understand that all academic work submitted must be my own.
16. I will not use generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) to produce work that I present as my own without teacher permission.
17. I may use AI tools (year 9 and above) with guidance – for example, to generate ideas or check spelling – only where this is permitted by the teacher or subject.
18. I understand that plagiarism, including copying from AI or other digital sources, is a serious academic offence.

5. Use of School IT Systems & Equipment

19. I will treat all school equipment with care and report any faults or breakages promptly.
20. I will leave shared IT spaces clean and tidy for others.
21. I understand that I may be charged for damage to school property caused by misuse or neglect.
22. I will not install or attempt to install any unauthorised software or hardware.
23. I will only use the software provided by the School on school devices.
24. I will not attempt to bypass any settings or security systems, nor help others gain unauthorised access.
25. I will only access the accounts and systems I have been authorised to use.

6. Use of School IT for Learning

26. I will use school ICT equipment and my accounts primarily for schoolwork, homework, and co-curricular activities.
27. I understand that internet use is filtered and monitored to help protect pupils from harmful or inappropriate content.
28. I will only contact staff via school email or Teams and understand that any online interaction with teachers must be professional and through official school platforms.

Declaration

I will review and comply with the Pupil Acceptable Use of IT and Digital Technologies Policy. I understand that these expectations apply:

- While at school using personal or school devices
- During school activities or trips
- When interacting with the school community online

I understand that:

- The School may retain and review data created or transmitted via school systems
- Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, including the loss of IT access and parental involvement
- Where appropriate, external authorities may be informed of serious misuse or illegal activity
- I must comply with any relevant third-party terms and conditions when using educational services

Pupil Name: _____ Tutor Group: _____

Pupil Signature: _____ Date: _____

FAQs

If you have any further questions, please contact ICT department or the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leads) or the Deputy DSLs.

1. Does the Pupil Acceptable Use of IT Policy refer to my computer use out of school?

The Pupil Acceptable Use of IT Policy refers to what you do while at school, on a school trip, or using any school equipment, system, or service hosted on premise or in the cloud. However, we would like you to consider points 1 to 3 whenever you are using any ICT hardware or service as these points are concerned with the wellbeing of you and others. Please also be aware of the School's Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions policy, which can cover behaviour out of school.

2. How does the warning about posting personal information apply to computer use at school?

You may not use school computers to post personal information about yourself or others which could put yourself or others at risk. For example, if accessing Fantasy Football for Maths you should use a nickname.

Safeguarding personal information is recommended at home, too, but there the matter is the responsibility of yourself and your parents. The ThinkUKnow website gives you advice about this. www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Please be aware that some online services reveal your GPS location, which can enable others to stalk you. Also, photos taken on many smart phones contain GPS location information; this function should be switched off if you are posting photos online.

3. How do I know if a property owner has given permission for photography/video?

Most establishments will display signs if photography/video is forbidden.eg museums, places of worship. If in doubt, ask the teacher who is in charge of the trip.

4. Bancroft's is private property…. can I take photos/videos?

You may not take photographs or video footage in school on any device without the express permission of a member of staff.

Using photographic material of any kind to bully, harass or intimidate others will not be tolerated and will constitute a serious breach of discipline.
Students must be aware that staff in charge may apply restrictions on taking images during some activities such as plays and concerts.

5. Is it practical to obtain the permission of everyone featured in a photo/video?

You should confirm that the main characters, usually your friends, (not people in the background in a large crowd), are willing to be in a photo/video. Respect the wishes of anybody who does not want you to photograph or video them.

This policy applies only to images of Bancroftians, at school or engaged on school activities off site, and any images posted on the Bancroft's system, however, it is good practice to respect privacy in other contexts, too, but this is your own responsibility.

6. Will I be causing distress if I express views on a controversial subject?

This document does not prohibit the expression of views on current affairs topics, however controversial and sensitive issues are best debated in a classroom where a teacher chairs the discussion, and a range of views can be put forward.

The Pupil Acceptable Use of IT Policy prohibits causing upset or distress by bullying. This is made clear in our Anti Bullying Policy (in the Digest and on the website).

7. What does the School do with the data I have created, stored, and transmitted?

Files that students create in their personal area are deleted 6 months after they leave. The data would also be held on backup tape for at least a year. Internet browsing histories would be retained for longer, but only in the form of an offline archive.

Some examples of a student's work may be retained for teaching purposes or to display on open days. In the case of data, photos, that students submit to staff to go onto the students' shared drives, will remain until the member of staff who placed them there removes them.

8. What do you mean by services provided by third parties?
Third parties' services are, for example, Microsoft's Live@Edu eMail and Office Live. All senior school students have a Microsoft Live@Edu email account. When you are accessing these hosted Microsoft services you will have to agree to the service terms and conditions (in addition to the school's Pupil Acceptable Use IT Policy.)

9. **Why is the School allowed to search my device and in what circumstances might that happen?**
As a school, we are legally allowed to search phones under certain conditions and point 9 of the Agreement seeks to make pupils aware of this. Please be reassured that the searching of a device is rare and is certainly not intended to result in 'stop and search' style operations by staff. It is designed to protect and safeguard children from harmful or indecent content and not to intrude into personal conversations. A mobile phone cannot be opened without the passcode or face ID anyway, so a pupil's cooperation is needed to search it in the first place. School powers to search and screen pupils and confiscate prohibited items are laid out in The Department for Education's Departmental Advice called "**Searching, screening and confiscation**" (July 2022) which applies to all schools in England. Page 19 outlines the statutory guidance for dealing with electronic devices.
Our approach to this is set out in finer detail, in accordance with this advice, in our Behaviour, Sanctions and Rewards Policy, which is on our school website.