

The St Michael Steiner School

Electronic Media Acceptable Usage Policy

Aims of this policy

This policy is supplementary to our Child Protection, Health and Safety and Media and e-safety policies and aims to provide guidance for staff and students in the acceptable use of electronic media at school.

Steiner Waldorf Education and electronic media

Steiner Waldorf Education develops the capacity for imagination, healthy feeling, independent thinking, and an active will. It is now widely recognised that media, including television, movies, electronic games and computers, can have a debilitating effect on the development of these capacities.

While it is important to be aware that exposure to and use of electronic media always has an effect on the capacities mentioned above, even in adults, we recognise and value the fact that information technology, for entertainment, research and communication, is available to everyone, and that older children will use it. However, the internet is an unmanaged, open communications channel, most of the content is published for an adult audience and much is unsuitable for children and young people. (see Media and e-safety policy)

Computers and the internet can be valuable tools for older students, but unless it is carefully managed, the use of electronic media at school can negatively affect students' ability to focus, think and work.

Staff and older students may use digital media at school to record their work, for example, processes in craft or other projects, presentations and oral assessments. (See the High School Students' Handbook for information about how this is monitored and regulated.)

Guidelines and rules for students

1. Children in the Kindergarten and Lower School (Classes 1 - 5) do not use computers or mobile phones at school.
2. Children in the Lower and Middle School who travel to school by themselves are allowed to bring mobile phones to school with their parents' permission and with their Class Teachers' knowledge, and must switch them off and keep them in their bags or hand them to their Class Teacher (whichever is asked of them) on arrival. They must not be switched on at school.
3. Children in the Middle School (Classes 6, 7 & 8) may sometimes use school computers under supervision but are not allowed to bring their own laptops or tablets or to use mobile phones at school.
4. Students in the High School may bring and use their own laptops, tablets and mobile phones for research and writing in lessons and have access to the internet via the school wifi at some times and in some parts of the school.
5. High School students are not allowed to use mobile phones on school premises outside their own classrooms and they must be switched off during lessons unless specific permission has been given for them to be used in each case.
6. Students are not allowed to post any photographs or recordings made at school on social media or public websites.

7. As a general rule, emerging technologies not mentioned specifically in this policy will not be allowed at school until their usefulness/safety has been assessed.

Guidelines for staff

1. Guidance for Early Years staff is more restrictive because they are often required to help children in toilets or to change their clothes.
2. In the Early Years, staff mobile phones should be turned off and not be carried around, except for trips off school premises.
3. In the Kindergarten, staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of children for their own records; they must use the Kindergarten cameras.
4. Kindergarten staff and volunteers must not take cameras or phones into toilets when helping children.
5. Staff should not use mobile phones in areas of the school premises accessible to children except to access the internet for research in lessons, to check the time (e.g. on break duty) or to call someone in an emergency.
6. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, on our annual Consent Form we ask for parental consent to take photographs and recordings of individual children participating in school activities for use in on-line or printed publicity materials.
7. If photographs or recordings are made of or containing children for whom consent has not been given, these must be deleted, or the images of these children obscured, immediately.
8. Staff should consult at least one other colleague, including at least one College member, before allowing students to use mobile phones during lessons for any purpose.
9. Staff must monitor students' internet use at school and may confiscate hardware if this privilege is abused through inappropriate or excessive use.
10. Photographs or recordings made at school must not be posted on any social media except on the school's website or FaceBook page by the Administrator of those media.
11. Parents and visitors should not be allowed to take photographs of children except when given explicit permission in controlled situations.
12. Staff may not be 'friends' with pupils on any social networking site.
13. As a general rule, emerging technologies not mentioned specifically in this policy should not be allowed at school until their usefulness/safety has been assessed.

This article on the school website examines some of these issues in more depth: http://stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Screens_and_Teens_article.pdf