E-safety Policy

Introduction

It is the duty of the Maria Montessori School to ensure that every child in its care is safe; and the same principles apply to the digital world as apply to the real world. IT and online communications provide unrivalled opportunities for enhanced learning in addition to traditional methods, but also pose greater and more subtle risks to young people. Our children and secondary students are therefore taught how to stay safe in the online environment and how to mitigate risks, including but not limited to the risk of identity theft, bullying, harassment, grooming, stalking, abuse and radicalisation.

New technologies are continually enhancing communication, the sharing of information, learning, social interaction and leisure activities. Current and emerging technologies used in and outside of school include:

- Websites;
- Email and instant messaging;
- Blogs;
- Social networking sites;
- Chat rooms;
- Music / video downloads;
- Gaming sites;
- Text messaging and picture messaging;
- Video calls;
- Podcasting;
- Online communities via games consoles; and
- Mobile internet devices such as smart phones and tablets.

This policy, supported by the Acceptable Use policy (for all staff, visitors and children) is implemented to protect the interests and safety of the whole school community. It aims to provide clear guidance on how to minimise risks and how to deal with any infringements. It is linked to the following school policies:

- Safeguarding
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Anti-Bullying;
- Acceptable Use Policy;
- Data Protection

We understand the responsibility to educate our pupils on e-safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills necessary to enable them to remain both safe

and within the law when using the internet and related technologies in and beyond the classroom. We also understand the importance of involving pupils in discussions about e-safety and listening to their fears and anxieties as well as their thoughts and ideas.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all members of the school community, including staff, children, parents and visitors, who have access to and are users of MMI's IT systems. In this policy 'staff' includes teaching and non-teaching staff, trustees, and regular volunteers. 'Parents includes childrens' carers and guardians. 'Visitors' includes anyone else who comes to the school, including occasional volunteers.

Both this policy and the Acceptable Use Policy (for all staff, visitors and children) cover both fixed and mobile internet devices provided by the school (such as PCs, laptops, webcams, tablets, , digital video equipment, etc.); as well as all devices owned by children, staff, or visitors and brought onto school premises (personal laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.).

The Maria Montessori School wishes to ensure that our children are able to use the internet and related communication technologies appropriately and safely. IT and online communication provide unrivalled opportunities for enhanced learning but also pose greater and more subtle risks to young people.

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard the children at the Maria Montessori School. It details actions and behaviours required from the children and staff in order to maintain an e-safe environment. It also aims to set out how technology is used to enhance learning in the Montessori Classroom.

Education and training

Staff: awareness and training

New staff receive information on MMI's e-Safety and Acceptable Use policies when they join the Organisation.

All staff working with children are responsible for demonstrating, promoting and supporting safe behaviours in their classrooms and following school e-Safety procedures.

Teaching staff are encouraged to incorporate e-safety activities and awareness.

A record of concern must be completed by staff as soon as possible if any incident relating to e-safety occurs and be provided directly to the Head of School.

Montessori Pedagogy and Technology in the Classroom

As a scientist, Dr Montessori was interested in technology; she placed value, as do we, on the children's use of technology to support learning at the appropriate time in their development. Maria Montessori also emphasised the importance of the hand and its connection to the mind as an essential aspect of human development and so technology is intentionally limited in the Children's House and Early Elementary Years.

In the **Children's House** the child is creating his personality and building an understanding of the real world through his senses and movement. The emphasis in the Children's House is therefore to offer the child motives for real, purposeful work that encourages independence and supports the co-ordination of the mind and the hand.

Children entering the Elementary are in a different phase of development. They are developing a reasoning mind and are interested in the wider world around them. They have many questions about "why" things happen and research is actively supported. In the early years of the Elementary children are still developing their reading and writing skills and this research is encouraged through books, an important preparation to develop the critical thinking skills required for effective internet research later on.

In the **Elementary years,** technology can support studies in the following ways:

- Going Out research, bookings, and planning.
- Information online that is not available in books, particularly relevant for statistics that change annually and similar work.
- Presentation of group work.
- Particular programmes/tools that support a group of children's work.
- Technology that supports the learning of something required by the national curriculum, for example typing skills.
- Tools that support scientific exploration.
- Creative endeavours such as the study of music or art which can be enhanced greatly by specific technology.

In Montessori environments the children practice grace and courtesy and learn skills for living in our society and this includes living in the technological age. Just as in the Children's House the children are learning how to use it to live alongside each other, the elementary children are learning the nuance of the language of technology. We support the development of these skills in the following ways:

- Not everything that is published on the internet is true. We support the children to question the credibility of information on the internet.

- The resources on the internet are infinite – we help the children to develop the skills to find what they are looking for.

- We help the children to develop the awareness that anything they post on the internet must be something that they would be happy to say to someone face to face.

- We encourage the children to talk when they stumble on internet content that they are uncomfortable with.

In the **Adolescent** years, the School's aim is to enable students to become safe and responsible users of digital technologies and to have the skills, knowledge, and understanding to be able to live, learn and work successfully in a digital society.

Digital technologies include any device that connects to the Internet, including mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, laptop and desktop computers, and wearable technology. It also includes the School's internet provision and cloud services.

Students will acquire the following skills:

- understanding and using different technology systems
- selecting and using technology effectively and productively
- collaborating with peers and experts using a variety of digital environments and media
- sharing ideas with multiple audiences using a variety of digital environments and media
- finding information for disciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiries, using a variety of media, including digital
- collecting and analysing data to identify solutions and make informed decisions
- using critical-literacy skills to analyse and interpret media communications
- understanding and respecting intellectual property rights
- identifying and managing one's personal digital footprint
- understanding and protecting one's digital identity (identity theft)
- understanding and implementing effective cyber-security
- understanding content validation (how to check authenticity and accuracy of inline content)
- understanding and respecting age-ratings, for example to access social media and games
- understanding the risks associated with potentially harmful 'Lifestyle' websites, which might promote violence, especially against women and girls; minimise or celebrate discrimination and abuse, in all their forms; or diminish the dangers of, or glamorise, serious mental health concerns such as anorexia, self-harm or even suicide.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of School has responsibility for e-safety and will:

- Strive to keep up to date on current e-safety issues and guidance issued.
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate training and guidance to implement the policy and procedures.
- Ensure that all students know how to report abuses arising from the use of technology.
- Ensure allegations of misuse or known incidents are dealt with appropriately and promptly.
- Ensure effective online safeguarding support systems are in place such as filters and firewalls.

Protective Measures

- We understand the responsibility to educate our pupils on e-safety issues; teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skill necessary to enable them to remain safe.
- Mobile Technologies available for use by children below the age of 12 are stored in a locked cupboard. Access is available via the Lead Teacher.
- All staff working with children are responsible for demonstrating, promoting and supporting safe behaviours in their classroom and following e-safety procedures. When children use

school computers, staff should make sure children are fully aware of the agreement they are making to follow the school's IT guidelines. All Upper Elementary children will devise and agree upon a code of conduct in the class meeting supported by the Lead Teacher.

- As with all issues of safety at school, staff are encouraged to create a talking culture in order to address any e-safety issues which may arise. This is addressed through the class meeting.
- Access to the internet is monitored through supervision, the log book of internet searches, monitoring the search history on the device. The children should be made aware that all internet usage via the school's systems is monitored.
- There is a strong firewall protection on our network.

We will take all reasonable precautions to prevent access to inappropriate material. However due to the international scale and linked nature of internet content, it is not always possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a computer connected to the school network. The children must report any accidental access to inappropriate material directly to the Lead Teacher. Deliberate access to any inappropriate material by a child will be dealt with under the School's Behaviour Management Policy.

In the event of the misuse of technology by any member of the school community a record of concern must be completed by staff as soon as possible and provided directly to the Head of School.

As with all issues of safety, if a child, parent/carer has a complaint relating to e-safety prompt action will be taken to deal with it. Complaints should be addressed to the Lead Teacher in the first instance who will then inform the Head of School. Complaints of a child protection nature will be dealt with in accordance with our child protection procedure.

Communication with Parents

This policy is available for parents on the school website. The Maria Montessori School recognises the crucial role parents play in the protection of their children in respect of online safety. The School organises awareness sessions for parents.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal Electronic devices of all kinds are increasingly becoming part of children's lives. Schools around the world are dealing with the impact of such devices at school.

At times, our mission of providing authentic Montessori Education is jeopardized by students having certain items at school. As with any policy we strive to preserve the peacefulness and productivity of the classroom environments.

Personal electronics devices such as mobile phones, iPads or other can be a significant disruption to the work of children and teachers at school. For this reason, children under the age of 12 may not bring personal electronics of any kind to school.

Consequences to a child having a device at school will include at the discretion of the teacher, having the device taken away and returned to the child upon dismissal or having the device taken away and returned to the parent.

A mobile phone may be brought into school if a child is walking to and from school on their own. In this situation, parents / carer must inform the School in writing that this is the case via the Independent Walker form.

Acceptable Use Agreement - Staff

The acceptable use of digital equipment is covered in the Maria Montessori Institute's staff handbook in the Use Of Telephone, E-mail Systems and Internet policy. The main points are summarised below:

Staff will:

- Use the School's equipment for School teaching and/or learning and other lawful, appropriate activities.
- Use electronic resources in a way that reflects a professional duty of care for the community at the School.
- Respect security protocols and procedures and will not disclose passwords or security information to anyone other than the Institute's outsourced IT provider.
- Report immediately any activity that may concern student safety to an appropriate person within the School such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the School Leadership Team.
- Ensure communications within the School community are respectful.
- Ensure data relating to the School is kept secure and report any breach of data security.
- Model and promote acceptable digital behaviour within the School Community.
- Respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

Staff understand and agree that the School may monitor the use of electronic resources to ensure compliance with this agreement. Staff acknowledge and agree that the School has a right to intercept and monitor email, delete inappropriate materials and ultimately suspend an account if unauthorised or unlawful activity is taking place.

Acceptable Use Agreement - Students

1. Students will use the School's equipment primarily to support their learning at the School and other lawful, appropriate activities.

2. Students will use electronic resources in a way that reflects a sense of care for the community at the School.

3. Students will respect security protocols and procedures and will not disclose passwords or security information to anyone other than their Lead Teacher.

4. Students will immediately report any activity that may concern student safety to an appropriate person at the School, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Lead Teacher

5. Students will ensure communications within the School's community are respectful.

6. Students will ensure data relating to the School is kept secure.

7. Students will model and promote acceptable digital behaviour both within and outside the School.

8. Students will respect copyright and intellectual property rights.

9. Students will respect age restrictions for all online services.

Students are informed that the School may monitor the use of electronic resources to ensure compliance with this agreement. Students acknowledge that the School has a right to intercept email, delete inappropriate materials and ultimately suspend a students' account if unauthorised or unlawful activity is taking place.

Breach of Policy

Staff who fail to support and/or implement, or actively breach the Use Of Telephone, E-mail Systems and Internet policy, are in breach of contract and subject to disciplinary procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook.

Students who fail to support and/or implement, or actively breach the Acceptable Use Agreement, will be subject to the consequences outlined in our Behaviour Policy.