



# ICT Policy

Updated 10 April 2023

This policy deals with use of *information and communication technology* (ICT) at school.

This policy adheres to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) guidelines and should be read alongside the Data Protection policy.

## Use of ICT and the Internet

The school Internet access is for staff use only. Internet access will help with internal and external communications, research and use of learning tools to enrich and extend learning activities in the classroom.

Pupils will be taught about basic functions of the internet: what it is for and how it helps others communicate.

The school will endeavour to ensure that the copying and subsequent use of Internet-derived materials by staff and pupils complies with copyright law.

## 1. Computer and Information systems

Information systems are securely maintained.

The security of the school information systems and system capacity is reviewed regularly.

Systems are kept safe by:

- Having virus, spyware, and ransomware protection installed and updated constantly.
- Windows Server 2012 domain or Office 365 user accounts with complex passwords.
- Security settings applied to files and folders as appropriate.
- Daily off-site backups of critical data.
- Automatic application of software and operating system updates.
- Servers holding data either hosted in the cloud or in alarmed premises.



## **2. The publication of pupils' images and work.**

Photographs and videos of the children are taken daily on official school tablets and uploaded weekly to the secure My Montessori Child platform. Every photo is catalogued as an observation and saved in the MMC electronic folder of each child, with that child's parents having full access to it.

No other pictures can be saved on any other devices, except for those belonging to the Head, the Deputy Head and the Manager. Parents' or guardians' authorization will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website or in other marketing materials (photos for magazines, brochures, etc) Pupils' full names will not be used online or in written material, particularly in association with photographs.

At the end of each term, all photos and videos are deleted from the tablets.

## **3. Publication of pupil's images online on social platforms**

At present, the school uses WhatsApp for daily communication with parents.

## **4. The management of social networking and personal publishing for staff**

Staff are forbidden to publish images of the children in their personal accounts or to share images without the consent of parents.

Staff must not communicate with any current parents using public social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. nor are they allowed to connect through social sites. Friendship requests can only happen after the child has left the nursery.

## **5. How Internet access will be authorised**

All staff and volunteers must read and sign the *Staff Code of Conduct* before using any school ICT resource (see appendix).

## **6. How the Internet is used by the community in the school**

Community users coming into school must adhere to this policy. Wifi codes are shared with student-teachers who will follow the code of conduct.

## **7. How will the policy be discussed with staff?**

All staff will be given the policy and its application and importance explained. Staff should be aware that Internet traffic can be monitored and traced to the individual user. Discretion and professional conduct is essential. Staff training on safe and



responsible Internet use, and on this policy, will be provided as required.

## 8. How will parents' support be enlisted?

A partnership approach with parents will be encouraged. This may include parent evenings with demonstrations and suggestions for safe home Internet use or newsletters with ideas to put in practice.

Some of the advice for parents includes:

- Nursery-aged children should use the Internet (and any apps) with adult supervision.
- They should not know passwords or screen-lock codes. If they discover them, the codes should be changed.
- Monitor and discuss the content children have access to, especially on YouTube. There are many violent and inappropriate videos linked to famous children's characters as click-bait.
- Screen time should be reduced to a few minutes a day and never as a way to get the child to eat or behave

## Use of ICT and communications

### 1. Mobiles

Mobiles are strictly forbidden inside the classroom. The only exceptions are the mobiles of the deputy, manager, headmistress, as they might need to communicate with parents directly during the session.

When the manager is out of the school premises, she will designate a teacher who will use their phone to communicate with management. The school communicates with walkie-talkies to connect the downstairs area (office, lunch bunch) with the outside and upstairs classroom.

The student teachers are not allowed to use their phone inside the classroom, during school trips or while in the presence of children.

Teachers are allowed to keep mobiles in the kitchen or inside their bags in the downstairs area.

### 2. E-mail

All e-mail communication should be polite and clear. Staff need to remember they represent the school, and as such, they embody its values. This should be reflected in their communication.

If any member of staff should contact an external organisation, the email should list the staff member's name, their role and contact details. Good



grammar is expected and, if in doubt, they will ask a member of the management team for help.

When dealing with correspondence with the parents, teachers need to assess the level of importance of the content. Depending on the sensitivity of the content, the manager and headmistress should be copied in on the message.

### **3. Telephone conversations**

Telephone calls should be clear, concise and should not aggravate parents. A teacher can choose to call a parent (such as a working parent) to have a catch-up conversation and write down the main points in the PSED file. If the parent needs to be contacted because of an emergency or a serious matter (e.g. a bite, a child got hurt outside), the teacher should try different strategies in order to gain serenity and clarity before speaking. A good idea is to write down a summary of what is to be communicated, preferably with the advice of another member of staff, in order to convey clearly the message. This is particularly important if the teacher is nervous, or English is their second language.

### **Use of ICT and technology in the classroom**

The Montessori philosophy talks extensively about the connection between hand and brain. The myelinization of neurons is strengthened by the work of the hand with different tools. Therefore, it is the school's decision not to rely on technological devices as activities, but, rather, as means to enhance different messages. In other words, the classroom does not have an iPad or an electronic board as a permanent fixture, but would use them, or something similar, if they fit the project.

As sensorial and curious explorers, nursery-aged children are introduced to the world around them through experience. The presence of technology will be introduced individually or in groups by:

1. Using different equipment such as a photocopier or computer to show how to make copies of a particular work.
2. Using a projector, a sound cube, or other technological tool to present a particular topic.
3. Demonstrating the uses of the Internet and ways of communicating by planning Skype calls or sending emails involving the children, family members and teachers.
4. Talking about what is correct and incorrect when using another person's phone.
5. Discussing electricity and batteries, and encouraging critical thinking by asking and explaining how things work around us.



6. Using a laptop to show videos or research with the children, for instance, watching volcanos erupting or finding out how long giraffes' tongues are.



## **Appendix 1 – ICT Acceptable policy of Gardens Montessori for staff and volunteers (signature needed)**

The use of electronic communication and information retrieval is no more than the addition of another medium. The same behavioural and professional standards are expected of staff and volunteers as is the case with traditional written communications, the telephone and face to face meetings.

The internet as a resource is constantly changing. These guidelines will be updated in the light of experience and developments of the internet itself.

### **1. Acceptable Use of the Internet and Corporate Resources**

As a general principle, internet access is provided to staff and volunteers to support work-related activities. The following list is not intended to be a definitive list, but sets out broad areas of use that the organization considers to be acceptable uses of the internet:

- a. To provide communication within Gardens Montessori via email or Gardens Montessori website.
- b. To provide communication with other organisations for educational purposes.
- c. To distribute electronic copies of the weekly newsletter.
- d. To distribute details regarding organisation meetings
- e. To provide electronic methods of communication
- f. Any other use that directly supports work-related functions.

### **2. Unacceptable uses of the Internet and Corporate Resources**

The following uses will be regarded as not acceptable:

- a) Perpetrating any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy.
- b) Participating in racial, sexual, homophobic or other harassment.
- c) Playing non-educational games.
- d) Accessing pornographic, obscene, hateful or illegal material.
- e) Soliciting personal information with the intent of using such information to cause harm.
- f) Entering into a commitment on behalf of Gardens Montessori (unless you have explicit permission to do this).
- g) Downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless this download is covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licence. Hacking into unauthorised areas.
- h) Publishing (in whatever form) defamatory or knowingly false material about Gardens Montessori, colleagues, or pupils.



- i) Revealing confidential information about Gardens Montessori in a personal online posting, upload or transmission - including financial information and information relating to pupils, staff or internal discussions.
- j) Using personal email to communicate with or about any pupils.
- k) Undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources.
- l) Introducing any form of malicious software into the corporate network.
- m) Disrupting the work of other users. This includes the propagation of computer viruses and use of the internet.
- n) Using any Bit torrent systems
- o) Using resources for personal or private business purposes.

### 3. Netiquette

The following general principles should be adopted:

- a) Be polite. Do not be abusive in messages to others.
- b) Use appropriate language. Remember that you are a representative of Gardens Montessori and that you are using a non-private network.

### 4. Email

- a) Whenever e-mail is sent, it should be from an official work email address which includes the sender's name, job title and organisation's name.
- b) Each user is responsible for mail originating from their user ID (e-mail address).
- c) Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail is prohibited.
- d) Attempts to read, delete, copy or modify the e-mail of other users is prohibited.
- e) Attempts to send junk mail and chain letters is prohibited.
- f) If you receive e-mail from outside Gardens Montessori that you consider to be offensive or harassing, speak to your line manager (harassing internal e-mail will be dealt with under Gardens Montessori's guidelines).
- g) You should be aware that, in the event of Gardens Montessori being involved in legal proceedings, any relevant e-mails (including internal e-mail) may have to be disclosed, on the same basis as is the case for written documents.
- h) Emails can be accessed via the organisation's ICT equipment, and personal mobiles. You will need to ensure that your device is secured by a password at all times, that this password is not shared with any other person, and that all reasonable care is taken to prevent unauthorised access to confidential information.

### 5. Social Networking Sites



Social media refers to blogs, microblogs like Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, LinkedIn, videos, social networks, discussion forums, wikis, and other personal web space. Gardens Montessori permits the use of internet and social media on work premises, outside of normal working hours, and without interference to your, or others', day-to-day duties, subject to the conditions shown below. Personal access should not be in view of any pupils, and you are reminded to log out or 'lock' the screen immediately upon leaving your mobile phone or PC, even if only for a short while.

- a) Do not "speak" for Gardens Montessori unless you have express permission to do so; this covers all comments relating to Gardens Montessori.
- b) Protect yourself from identity theft.
- c) If you can be linked to Gardens Montessori, act appropriately. This includes photos and status updates.
- d) Remember that colleagues, prospective employers, parents and children may see your online information.
- e) Gardens Montessori policy is that you are not allowed to be 'friends' with parents of current pupils. You may do so after the child has left the school. If in doubt, please seek advice from senior management.

## 6. Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be taken against staff and volunteers who contravene these guidelines, in accordance with Gardens Montessori's disciplinary procedures. If you require any advice on the use of these guidelines, please contact your line manager.