ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND ONLINE SAFETY

Guidance for Parents, Staff and Children

This guidance aims to provide information and advice for staff, parents and children in the use of electronic media and the internet.

Steiner Waldorf Education and Electronic Media

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

The young child

We ask that parents withdraw media exposure of all kinds from the daily experience of the young child. In this context, 'the young child' means the child under 9. We cannot over-emphasise how important this is - how much children benefit from it.

Online Safety

Examples of e-safety issues include:

• Exposure to inappropriate material, such as pornography, violence, 'hate' and lifestyle websites (e.g. sites which promote self harm)

• Bullying via texts and social networks

• Vulnerability to identity theft

• Copyright issues (e.g. through illegally downloading music, images or films)

• The danger of unknowingly making contact with predatory people via chat rooms and social networks and becoming vulnerable to sexting or grooming.

• Social networks simulate true human connection and build a false social context that can replace real social interaction and leave children isolated.

• Many teenagers use online gaming excessively and this leads to exhaustion, inability to sleep and to think clearly, lack of concentration and, as a result, frequent absence from school and illness.[1]

It is strongly recommended that parental guidance and careful vigilance be exercised in monitoring older children's activity on the Internet; these issues will be discussed regularly at parents' meetings. We also advise parents to discuss them with their children's teachers and with other parents.

Support from the kindergarten

1. While we offer guidance to parents about use of electronic media outside school, we cannot enforce this.
2. Staff responsible for Online Safety education take annual online safety training through Educare .
3. We provide information to parents, so that they are aware of the dangers and to equip them with tools to guard their children against exposure to the damaging effects of these media.
4. The use of electronic media is a topic in Parents' evenings.
5. From Age 5, teachers will initiate regular conversations with parents and with the children, about the safe use of media and such things as privacy and bullying via electronic media. (see 'E-safety curriculum policy')
6. Children are not allowed to use mobile phones on school premises at any time.
7. Children in the Kindergarten do not use computers at school.
8. Staff may not be 'friends' with children and parents on any social networking site.

Electronically-held personal data

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, we ensure that personal information held electronically is:

- held and used with the subject's knowledge and permission
- held and used for specifically stated purposes only
- kept for no longer than is necessary (See Data Retention Policy)
- handled according to people's data protection rights
- kept safe and secure
- shared with or transferred to other bodies in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

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