



Thinking Schools Academy Trust

“Transforming Life Chances”

ICT Acceptable Use Policy

This policy was adopted on	March 2023
The policy is to be reviewed on	July 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy provides the guidelines of acceptable use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) equipment and facilities within The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. ICT is seen as beneficial to all members of the Academy in supporting learning, teaching, research, administration, and approved business activities of the Academy. The Academy's ICT Facilities provide several integral services and, therefore, any attempt to misuse a computer system could cause significant disruption to other users at the Academy. This could also lead to a breach of the data protection rights of individuals, resulting in harm to that individual and the Academy.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Acceptable Use Policy is not to impose restrictions that are contrary to established culture of openness, trust, and integrity within the Academy. This policy is designed to protect all authorised users from illegal or damaging actions by individuals, either knowingly or unknowingly.
- 1.3 All Users, including but not limited to governors, staff, and students using the Academy's Information Technology and Systems must ensure that they have read this Policy before commencing to its information and communication technology. Failure to do so will not be accepted as a mitigation factor should a problem arise during employment or period of study.

2. Definitions

- 1.1. 2.1 “*Academy*” means Thinking Schools Academy Trust. This Policy applies to all Academies of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust and all Nurseries and Pre Schools of Little Thinkers Nursery & Pre School, a subsidiary of The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. When ‘Academy’ is used within this policy it applies to Nursery and Pre School settings. When ‘Headteacher/Principal’ is used with this policy it applies to Nursery Managers. When ‘The Thinking Schools Academy Trust’ is used within this policy is applies to Little Thinkers Nursery and Pre School.
- 2.2 “*ICT Device*” means any laptop, tablet, telephone, smartphone, desktop computer, console, printer, speaker, camera, or other electronic equipment that could be used for the carrying out of Academy business or the processing or storing of information, whether owned by the Academy or not.
- 2.3 “*ICT Facilities*” means all devices, systems, and services including, but not limited to, network infrastructure, ICT Devices, software, websites, web applications or services, and any device, system, service or connection, which may become available in the future which is provided as part of the ICT service.
- 2.4 “*Users*” means directors, committee members, Regional Governing Bodies, Academy Advisory Boards, staff, students, trainees, volunteers, temporary guests, and all other persons authorised by the Academy to use the ICT Facilities.

2.5 “*Personal use*” means any use or activity not directly related to the users’ employment, study, or purpose.

2.6 “*Authorised Personnel*” means employee(s) authorised by the Academy to perform systems administration and/or monitoring of the ICT Facilities.

2.5 “*Materials*” means files and data created using the ICT Facilities including but not limited to documents, photographs, audio, video, printed output, web pages, social networking sites, bulletin boards, newsgroups forums and blogs.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The Academy’s ICT Facilities should only be used to support learning, teaching, research, administration, and approved business activities of the Academy. The ICT Facilities must not be used for personal commercial, political, charitable, and other such activities unless expressly authorised by the Academy.

3.2 The Academy employs various measures to protect the security of its computing resources and of its user accounts. Users should be aware that the Academy cannot guarantee such security. Users should therefore engage in safe computing practices by always adhering to the Academy’s Information Security Policy, backing up files, and promptly reporting any misuse or violations of this policy.

3.3 All devices that use the ICT Facilities, and that are capable of supporting software updates, security updates and automatically updating anti-virus products, must have such software installed, working, and be configured to perform such updates.

3.4 Users’ accounts and passwords must not be shared with anyone and shall only be used by the account owner. Users are responsible for the security of their passwords, accounts and for setting account, sharing and file permissions. Disclosure of account or password information or failing to report any suspected unauthorised use/access. may result in disciplinary action.

3.5 Should an individual user account support permitting other users to access the account, such as delegating access to an email system’s inbox or calendar, only the account owner is authorised to permit access to be granted without using the Account Access Request Form in Appendix 1. Users are not permitted to permit access to any ICT Facility or User account to external or third parties, without explicit written permission from the Data Protection Officer or Head of Information Technology.

3.6 Occasionally the Academy may need to access information held by a User of the Academy within ICT Facilities, including, but not limited to, email, files stored on a personal computer or file storage or on other file store or backup media. This will usually occur when a User is absent, either ill or on leave, and a situation arises which requires a rapid response. Users must be made aware that the Academy reserves the right to obtain access to files stored upon systems and services owned by Academy, and that the privacy of personal material stored upon such systems and services in the event of authorised access cannot be guaranteed.

3.7 In the event that access is required to another user’s individual account(s), and the accounts owner cannot provide such authorisation, the Account Access Request

Form in Appendix 1, must be used. The Account Access Request must be authorised by Academy representatives as defined in the decision tree in Appendix 2. It is intended that these arrangements are for exceptional circumstances only and access requests will only be considered if they demonstrate that delay will cause disproportionate damage to the Academy. The written authorisation covers an individual act of access and only for the purposes and scope indicated on the authorisation form.

- 3.8 In exceptional circumstances, Authorised Personnel may need to make changes to user data or storage for the purposes of operating and providing a system or service. Where reasonable, Authorised Personnel should request permission of the data owner unless the situation is of such urgency as to make this impracticable. However, after such a change the file owner should be informed of the change and the purpose as soon as possible. The Authorised Personnel may not, without specific authorisation from the Data Protection Officer or Head of Information Technology, modify the contents of any file in such a way as to damage or destroy information.
- 3.9 Users must abide by all applicable laws and Academy policies to protect the copyrights and intellectual property rights of others. Copyrighted works may include texts, cartoons, articles, photographs, songs, videos, software, graphics, and other materials. This includes the use of the internet, as many of the materials available through the internet are protected by copyright. It is the responsibility of the user to assume that materials found upon the internet are copyrighted unless the materials contain an express disclaimer to the contrary. Users must obtain permission of the creator or publisher to copy or use software or other copyrighted materials written or created by others and must abide by contracts and agreements controlling installation and use of such software and other materials.
- 3.10 Users' use of the ICT Facilities must be in an ethical and legal manner and in accordance with Academy policies and procedures. Usage of the system to harass, defame, or invade the privacy of others, or to send or receive obscene materials, is not allowed, and may result in disciplinary action under policies controlled by the Academy or prosecution under applicable laws.
- 3.11 Users must not use the ICT Facilities to hold or process personal data except in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation and the Academy's Data Protection Policy.
- 3.12 Should a User wish to use the ICT Facilities for personal, personal commercial, political, or charitable or other activity not directly related to their position within the Academy, permission must be expressly granted by the Academy. Any such use must not hinder or interfere with an individual's duties and must not prevent the legitimate use of these facilities by others. Users may not use the Academy's ICT Facilities to store personal nonwork-related information or materials on the ICT Facilities (e.g. eBooks, music, home videos, photography), and use of the ICT Facilities is provided with no expectation of privacy.
- 3.12.1 If permission is granted for use personal, personal commercial, political, or charitable or other activity not directly related to their positions The ICT Facilities are used entirely at the risk of the user. The Academy will not be liable for any loss, damage or inconvenience

arising directly or indirectly from the use of ICT Facilities. Although it takes reasonable care to prevent the corruption of information, the Academy does not give any warranty or undertaking to the user about the integrity of information and accepts no responsibility for the malfunctioning of any computing hardware, software, or facility and/or any loss of any data or software or the failure of any security or privacy mechanism. No claim shall be made against the Academy, its employees, or agents in respect of any loss alleged to have been caused whether by defect in the resources or by act of neglect of the Academy, its employees, or affiliates.

4. Unacceptable Use

4.1 The Academy reserves the right to block, disconnect or otherwise prevent what it considers to be unacceptable use of its ICT Facilities. Unacceptable use includes, but is not limited to:

4.1.1 All actions or activities that are illegal or in conflict with the Academy's policies, procedures, processes and regulations or which breach contracts or policies applied to the Academy by third party through a valid service contract or agreement.

4.1.2 Using the ICT Facilities for access, creation, modification, storage, download, hosting, or transmission of material that could be considered pornographic, offensive, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate, or for placing direct or indirect links to websites which publish or host pornographic, offensive, or inappropriate material.

4.1.3 Publishing materials or making statements which the Academy may deem to be advocating illegal activity, or threatening, or harassing, or defamatory, or bullying or disparaging of others, or abusive, or libellous, or slanderous, or indecent, or obscene, or offensive or promotes unlawful discrimination, breaches copyright or otherwise causing annoyance, or inconvenience.

4.1.4 Unauthorised production, distribution, copying, selling, hiring, performing of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitisation and distribution of computer software, television, radio, streaming services, websites, photographs, magazines, books, music or any copyrighted sources and installation of any copyrighted software for which the Academy does not have an active licence or explicit permission of the copyright owner, is strictly prohibited.

4.1.5 Authoring or sending any form of electronic communications or messages, including, but not limited to, videos, chats, messages and/or emails that were unsolicited and may be considered inappropriate, junk, "chain letters", "Ponzi", hoax warnings or advertising, and that do not correctly identify you as the sender, or messages which appear to originate from another person.

4.1.6 Unauthorised recording, "screenshotting", capturing, photographing or any other means of observing and/or documenting the *Materials* of an ICT device, without prior notification and agreement.

- 4.1.6 Unauthorised transmission, distribution, discussion, or disclosure of information gained through a user's presence within the Academy or through the use of the ICT Facilities.
- 4.1.7 Connecting any non-approved ICT device, system, or service (including wireless access points) to Academy networks or setting up any network services, without the explicit or delegated permission from Authorised Personnel.
- 4.1.9 Unauthorised access (or attempted unauthorised access) to any ICT Facilities provided by the Academy.
- 4.1.10 Allowing, inciting, encouraging, or enabling others to gain or attempt to gain unauthorised access to the ICT Facilities.
- 4.1.11 Causing any damage to ICT Facilities, including through any intentional action, the consumption of food or drink, or moving or removing such Facilities without authorisation. The Academy reserves the right to charge for any damage caused.
- 4.1.12 Attempting to modify, alter or in any way interfere with ICT facility security controls, hardware or software, configurations, settings, equipment, data files or websites without the written authorisation or delegated permission from Authorised Personnel.
- 4.1.13 Introduction of unauthorised and/or malicious software or programs into the ICT Facilities, including, but not limited to: unlicensed software, viruses, worms, Trojan horses or logic bombs; by downloading, creating or using any program, tool or item of software designed to monitor damage, disrupt or interfere with the functioning of ICT Facilities, user accounts or data.
- 4.1.14 Effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication, including, but not limited to, accessing, or modifying data (or data headers) of which the user is not an intended recipient or logging into an ICT system or service, or account, that the user is not expressly authorised to access. Disruption includes, but is not limited to, network sniffing, pinged floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, and forged routing information.
- 4.1.15 Executing any form of network monitoring including any data capture, port scanning or security scanning without written authorisation or delegated permission from Authorised Personnel.
- 4.1.16 Registering for any system or service, including, but not limited to, social media accounts, web applications, domain names, which includes the name of the Academy or any similar name, or abbreviation that may mislead the public into believing that the domain name refers to the Academy.
- 4.1.17 Acting in any way that directly or indirectly causes disruption to others' use of Academy ICT Facilities or using ICT Facilities to disrupt or deny the use of ICT Facilities of third parties at any time.

This is not an exhaustive list but merely an indication of the types of conduct that could come under the heading of inappropriate. Failure to follow this policy may

result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. It may also lead to criminal or civil action.

5. Exemptions from Unacceptable Use

5.1 Where the use of the Academy's ICT Facilities is required for a purpose that would otherwise be considered an unacceptable use, an exemption to the Acceptable Use policy may be granted where such an exception is required for the Academy's related business (such as lawful study or research). The requesting user should notify their Headteacher/Principal (or Service Manager), prior to undertaking an unacceptable use. who must obtain explicit written permission for such use from the Data Protection Officer or Head of Information Technology, as appropriate. Advice on the application of certain legislation as it applies to the use of IT can be sought from Academy's Governance and Compliance team.

6. Remote Learning

6.1 Online collaboration is essential for remote learning providing increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home.

6.2 Users engaging, participating, or otherwise connected to the ICT Facilities are expected to abide by the Acceptable Use Policy, and all other applicable policies, including but not limited to the Remote Learning Policy.

7. ICT Monitoring

7.1 The Academy may monitor the usage of any or all ICT Facilities and has access to reports on any internet sites that have been visited. Such monitoring will be performed in compliance with this policy and the Academy's ICT Monitoring policy.

8. Monitoring & Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and may be subject to change.

Appendix 1

To gain access to the individual user account of another user, the below form must be completed, and the request authorised by the appropriate persons using the decision tree in Appendix 2. A request must be completed for each account to be access even if the accounts are assigned to the same user.

Account Access Request Form		
Account to be accessed	Name	
	Username	
	System	Name of system hosting the account (e.g. TSAT Active Directory)
Reason for access Please include why the access is in the interests of the Academy, for example, as the member of staff is off ill or on leave and legal deadline will be missed, or if any internal disciplinary offence or suspected or alleged civil or criminal act which may have been committed		
Names and Usernames List all Authorised Personnel and their job titles that will perform the monitoring	Name	
	Username	
	Name	
	Username	
	Name	
	Username	
Period Access is to be granted for (in days)		
Access is for investigation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Access Special Category Data	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Requestor	Name	
	Signature	
	Date	

Please turn over

Account Access Request Form (continued)		
Authorisation 1	Name	
	Signature	
	Position	
	Date	
Authorisation 2	Name	
	Signature	
	Position	
	Date	
Authorisation 3 (if required)	Name	
	Signature	
	Position	
	Date	
Data Protection Officer (If access request includes the need to access Special Category Personal Data the Data Protection Officer (or nominated delegate in absence) MUST authorise the request)	Name	
	Signature	
	Position	Data Protection Officer
	Date	

Please turn over

To be completed by ITS department

If access request is granted by assigning access rights to a user account, ITS must record the account that was given the rights and by whom.

Once the duration of the Access Request has expired, ITS must record that the previously granted rights have been revoked, and by whom.

Account Access Request Completion

Actions taken		
Account access request granted by	Name	
	Signature	
	Date	

Account Access Request Revocation		
Actions taken		
Account access revoked by	Name	
	Signature	
	Date	

Appendix 2

Account Access Request Decision Tree



Appendix 3 – Primary Student Acceptable Use Policy Agreement (Foundation-KS2)

We need to be safe when we use computers and the internet. To help us stay safe when we use computers:

- I will ask a teacher or suitable adult if I want to use the computers / tablets;
- I will only use activities that a teacher or suitable adult has told or allowed me to use;
- I will take care of the computer and other equipment;
- I will ask for help from a teacher or suitable adult if I am not sure what to do or if I think I have done something wrong;
- I know that my school may look at my use of computers / tablets;
- I will not take pictures, or record something I see on the computers / tablet;
- I will tell a teacher or suitable adult if I see something that upsets me on the screen; and
- I know that if I break the rules I might not be allowed to use a computer / tablet.

Name (child): _____

Signed (child): _____

Parent/Carer

I have read and understand that use of the Academy IT systems and devices is governed by the full Acceptable Use Policy and all of the policies available from the Academy's website www.tsatrust.org.uk.

The Academy's systems and devices are primarily intended for educational use and must not be used for personal or recreational purposes unless expressly permitted. The Academy may monitor use of the systems, devices, and digital communications at any time.

Parents and Carers should sign below to show that you have read, understood, and agree to the rules included in the Acceptable Use Agreement. If you do not sign and return this agreement, access will not be granted to the Academy's ICT Facilities.

Print Name (parent): _____

Signed (parent): _____

Date (parent): _____

Appendix 3 – Learner Acceptable Use Policy Agreement (KS3-KS5, Adult Education)

ICT is seen as beneficial to all members of the Academy in supporting learning, teaching, research, administration, and approved business activities of the Academy. The Academy's ICT Facilities provide several integral services and, therefore, any attempt to misuse a computer system could cause significant disruption to other users at the academy.

This Acceptable Use Agreement is intended to ensure:

- that all users, will be responsible and stay safe while using ICT devices, systems, and services.
- that Academy devices, systems, services, and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of these systems and users at risk.

Agreement

I understand that I must use Academy systems in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the systems and other users.

When using the Academy's ICT Facilities:

- I understand that the Academy systems and devices are primarily intended for educational use and that I will not use them for personal or recreational use unless I have prior permission.
- I understand that the Academy may monitor my use of the devices, systems, services, and communications at any time, and that I am not provided with personal private data storage.
- I will keep my username and password safe and secure – I will not share it, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password. I understand that I should not write down or store a password where it is possible that someone may steal it.
- I will not disclose or share personal information about others when on-line (this could include names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, age, gender, educational details, financial details etc...).
- I will immediately report any unpleasant or inappropriate material or messages or anything that makes me feel uncomfortable when I see it on-line.
- I will not open any hyperlinks in emails or any attachments to emails, unless I know and trust the person / organisation who sent the email, or if I have any concerns about the validity of the email (due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes).
- I will respect others' work and property and will not access, copy, remove or otherwise use or alter any other user's files, without the owner's knowledge and permission, and I will ensure that any use is in accordance with Academy policies.
- I understand there are risks when using the systems and services, and will not try to upload, download, or access any materials which are illegal or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others, nor will I try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering / security systems in place to prevent access to such materials.
- I will be polite and responsible when I communicate with others, I will not use strong, aggressive, or inappropriate language and I appreciate that others may have different opinions.

- I will respect copyright of materials and intellectual property rights and not take or distribute text, images, or other materials without permission.
- I will not record, photograph, or otherwise capture the content of a computer in any way, without permission.
- I will not damage, change, move or use any of the Academy devices, systems and services in any way that will disrupt their use for others.
- I will not install or attempt to install or store programmes of any type on any Academy device, nor will I try to alter computer settings.
- I understand that I am not permitted to attempt to connect any devices or systems (e.g. laptops, mobile phones, USB devices, etc...) to any Academy devices, systems or services without prior permission from a member of Staff within the Academy. I understand that, if I am permitted to use my own devices in the Academy, I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using school equipment.

I understand that I am responsible for my actions, both inside and outside of the Academy:

- I understand that the Academy also has the right to take action against me if I am involved in incidents of inappropriate behaviour, that are covered in this agreement, when I am out of the Academy and where they involve my membership of the Academy community (for example, cyber-bullying, use of images or personal information).
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this Acceptable Use Policy Agreement, I will be subject to disciplinary action. This may include loss of access to the Academy ICT systems and services, disciplinary action as set out in the codes of conduct and in the event of illegal activities involvement of the police.

I agree to always follow these guidelines when:

- using or connected to the Academy's devices, systems, and services.
- using my own equipment inside or outside of the Academy in a way that is related to me being a member of this Academy (for example, communicating with other members of the Academy, accessing Academy email, websites, and services, etc...).

I have read and understand that use of the Academy IT systems and devices is governed by the full Acceptable Use Policy and all of the policies available from the Academy's website www.tsatrust.org.uk.

Print Name _____

Signed _____

Date: _____

Parents and Carers should sign below to show that you have read, understood and agree to the rules included in the Acceptable Use Agreement. If you do not sign and return this agreement, access will not be granted to the Academy's ICT Facilities.

Print Name (parent):_____

Signed (parent): _____

Date (parent):

Appendix 3 – Acceptable Use Policy Agreement (Staff / All other users)

ICT is seen as beneficial to all members of the Academy in supporting learning, teaching, research, administration and approved business activities of the Academy. The Academy's ICT Facilities provide a number of integral services and, therefore, any attempt to misuse a computer system could cause significant disruption to other users at the academy. This could also lead to breaches of the data protection rights of a number of individuals causing harm to those individuals, and to the Academy.

This Acceptable Use Agreement is intended to ensure:

- that all users, will be responsible and stay safe while using ICT devices, systems and services.
- that Academy devices, systems, services and users are protected from accidental or deliberate misuse that could put the security of these systems and users at risk.

Agreement

I understand that I must use Academy systems in a responsible way, to ensure that there is no risk to my safety or to the safety and security of the systems and other users, including as to the personal data of others.

When using the Academy's ICT Facilities:

- I understand that the Academy systems and devices are primarily intended for educational use and that I will not use them for personal or recreational use unless I have prior permission;
- I understand that the Academy may monitor my use of the devices, systems, services and communications at any time;
- I will keep my username and password safe and secure – I will not share it, nor will I try to use any other person's username and password. I understand that I should not write down or store a password where it is possible that someone may steal it;
- I will not disclose or share personal information about others when on-line (this could include names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, age, gender, educational details, financial details etc....), unless expressly permitted by job description or in writing from the Academy;
- I will immediately report any unpleasant or inappropriate material or messages or anything that makes me feel uncomfortable when I see it on-line;
- I will not open any hyperlinks in emails or any attachments to emails, unless I know and trust the person / organisation who sent the email, or if I have any concerns about the validity of the email (due to the risk of the attachment containing viruses or other harmful programmes);

- I will respect others' work and property and will not access, copy, remove or otherwise use or alter any other user's files, without the owner's knowledge and permission, and I will ensure that any use is in accordance with Academy policies;
- I understand there are risks when using the systems and services, and will not try to upload, download or access any materials which are illegal or inappropriate or may cause harm or distress to others, nor will I try to use any programmes or software that might allow me to bypass the filtering / security systems in place to prevent access to such materials;
- I will be polite and responsible when I communicate with others, I will not use strong, aggressive or inappropriate language and I appreciate that others may have different opinions;
- I will respect copyright of materials and intellectual property rights and not take or distribute text, images or other materials without permission;
- I will not use or modify any of the Academy devices, systems and services in any way that will disrupt their use for others in any way;
- I will not install or attempt to install or store programmes of any type on any Academy device, nor will I try to alter computer settings;
- I understand that I am not permitted to attempt to connect any devices or systems (e.g. laptops, mobile phones, USB devices, etc....) to any Academy devices, systems or services without prior permission from an Authorised Person within the Academy. I understand that, if I am permitted to use my own devices in the Academy I will follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if I was using school equipment.
- I will ensure that when I take and / or publish images of others I will do so with their permission and in accordance with the Academy's policies. I will not use my personal equipment to record these images, unless I have permission from the Academy and from the individual to do so;
- I will only use social networking sites in school in accordance with the Academy's policies;
- I will only communicate with students, parents / carers, and other parties solely related to my employment, using systems authorised and provided by the Academy. Any such communication will be professional in tone and manner;
- I will not engage in any on-line activity that may compromise my professional responsibilities;
- I recognise that a failure to comply with the policies of the Academy, and any misuse of ICT equipment, could lead to breaches of the rights of data subjects and I will act at all times in accordance with such policies in order to avoid any inappropriate use of personal data, or the breach of the data protection rights of any individual.

I understand that I am responsible for my actions, both inside and outside of the Academy:

- I understand that the Academy also has the right to take action against me if I am involved in incidents of inappropriate behaviour, that are covered in this agreement, when I am out of the Academy and where they involve my membership of the Academy community (for example, use of images, digital communications, or personal information).
- I understand that if I fail to comply with this Acceptable Use Policy Agreement, I will be subject to disciplinary action. This may include loss of access to the Academy ICT systems and services, disciplinary action as set out in the codes of conduct and in the event of illegal activities involvement of the police.

I agree to follow these guidelines at all times when:

- using or connected to the Academy's devices, systems and services;
- using my own equipment inside or outside of the Academy in a way that is related to me being a member of this Academy (for example, communicating with other members of the Academy, accessing Academy email, websites and services, etc...).

I have read and understand that use of the Academy IT systems and devices is governed by the full Acceptable Use Policy and all of the policies available from the Academy's website www.tsatrust.org.uk.

Print Name _____

Signed _____

Date: _____