



Virtual Private Network (V.P.N.) Policy for Students

Introduction

Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) are software platforms which allow the user to access the internet as though they were in a different country. This is used by people to get around content blocks on video streaming services such as Netflix or to access websites which may be blocked in countries of residence. However, students who use VPNs can bypass the College's web filter which therefore means that they can bypass all the protections that come with the College's web filter. Students are therefore not allowed to use VPNs whilst at the College. This policy explains how potential VPN use by students is managed. This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with evolving technological advancements and student needs. Any such changes will be in accordance with Independent Schools Inspectorate and other statutory guidance.

The Purpose of this Policy is:

This policy outlines the College's stance on the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) by students on the College premises or using College-issued devices. The goal is to ensure a safe and secure online environment for all students.

Policy

1. Prohibition of VPN Use:

- Students are strictly prohibited from using VPNs on the College premises or College-issued devices. This includes personal devices brought onto the College grounds.
- The use of VPNs to bypass College-implemented internet filters or security measures is strictly forbidden.
- At the beginning of each College year, a two-week amnesty is provided to all students to remove any VPNs they have installed or to speak to the College's IT service provider for help with removal.

2. Rationale:

- College internet filters and security measures are in place to protect students from harmful content, cyber threats, and inappropriate online activity.
- VPN use can compromise the College's ability to monitor and protect students' online behaviour.
- Bypassing College filters can expose students to risks, including malware, phishing attacks, and access to harmful content.

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3. Consequences of Violation:

- Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to:
 - Warning or reprimand
 - Restriction of internet access on College devices
 - Parental notification
 - Suspension or exclusion, in severe cases

4. Exception for Authorised Use:

- In rare cases, the College may authorise the use of VPNs for specific educational purposes under strict supervision and with prior approval. Such instances will be documented and monitored closely.

Additional Considerations

- **Educational Awareness:** The College will provide educational resources to students and parents about the risks associated with VPN use and the importance of adhering to this College policy.
- **Technological Measures:** The College will continue to implement and update technological measures to detect and mitigate VPN usage.

Summary

VPN use by College students is prohibited because it enables students to bypass the College's web filter which therefore means that they can bypass all the protections that come with the College's web filter. There are various consequences (depending on the severity of the situation) for students found using VPNs – including suspension or exclusion. The College may authorise the use of VPNs for specific educational purposes under strict supervision and with prior approval. Students and their parents will be provided with educational materials so that they understand the importance of adhering to this College policy. By adhering to this policy, students contribute to a safer and more secure online learning environment.

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