

IT POLICY

1. REASONS FOR HAVING THIS POLICY

All Gaia Education's IT facilities and information resources remain the property of Gaia Education Ltd and not of particular individuals, teams or projects. By following this policy we ensure IT facilities are used:

- a) legally;
- b) securely;
- c) without undermining Gaia Education;
- d) effectively;
- e) in a spirit of co-operation, trust and consideration for others;
- f) so they remain available.

The policy relates to all Information Technology facilities and services provided by Gaia Education. All staff, consultants and volunteers are expected to adhere to it.

2. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Deliberate and serious breach of the policy statements in this section will lead to disciplinary measures, which may include the offender being denied access to computing facilities.

2.1 Copyright

Take care to use software legally in accordance with both the letter and spirit of relevant licensing and copyright agreements. Copying software for use outside these agreements is illegal and may result in criminal charges.

2.2 Security

2.2.1 Do not attempt to gain unauthorised access to information or facilities. The Computer Misuse Act 1990 makes it a criminal offence to obtain unauthorised access to any computer (including workstations and laptops) or to modify its contents. Under the Computer Misuse Act 1990, a person is guilty of an offence if he causes a computer to perform any function with intent to secure access to any program or data held in any computer, or to enable any such access to be secured; the access he intends to secure, or to enable to be secured, is unauthorised; and he knows at the time when he caused the computer to perform the function that that is the case. If you do not have access to information resources you feel you need, contact Gaia Education IT Administrator.

2.2.2 Do not disclose personal system passwords or other security details to other staff, consultants, or volunteers. Further, do not use anyone else's login; this compromises the security of Gaia Education.

2.2.3 If you leave your computer unattended without logging off, you are responsible for any misuse of it while you are away. In this regard, any staff, volunteer or consultant is required to have a login password set up on their laptop or workstation. Furthermore, any staff, volunteer or consultant is required to have their laptop or workstation setup to require this password when it is turned on and/or activated from sleep or hibernation mode.

2.2.4 Check memory sticks for viruses, even if you think they are clean computer viruses are capable of destroying Gaia Education's information resources. It is better to be safe than sorry

2.2.4 (i) - Any memory sticks and external hard drives used by staff, volunteer or consultant to carry and store any confidential information in regards Gaia Education's information resources

2.2.4 (ii) - Unless memory sticks and external hard drives are password protected, staff, volunteers or consultants should not use the above to carry and store confidential information in regards Gaia Education's information resources.

2.3 Information about people

If you are recording or obtaining information about students and delegates in regards courses and events, make sure you are not infringing on Data Protection legislations. In particular, when processing personal data, you must ensure to adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998. More specifically, when processing personal data you must ensure to follow the principles stated in **Schedule 1, Part 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998** (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/schedule/1>)

2.4 Appropriate use of the Internet and email

You are a representative of Gaia Education when you are on the Internet using a Gaia Education email account; accessing Gaia Education remote data; using a Gaia Education computer; or any other activities regarding the Internet (which may be linked to Gaia Education). Therefore make sure your actions are in the interest (and spirit) of Gaia Education and do not leave Gaia Education open to legal action. Avoid trading insults with other people using the Internet with whom you disagree. Obscenities/Pornography: Do not write it, publish it, look for it, bookmark it, access it or download it.

2.5 Electronic monitoring

2.5.1 Any information available within IT facilities must not be used to monitor the activity of individual staff in anyway (e.g. to monitor their working activity, working time, files accessed, Internet sites accessed, reading of their email without their prior knowledge.

Exceptions are:

- In the case of a specific allegation of misconduct, when the Management Team can authorise accessing of such information when investigating the allegation
- When the IT Support section cannot avoid accessing such information whilst fixing a problem.

2.5.2 In such instances, the person concerned will be informed immediately and information will not be disclosed wider than is absolutely necessary. In the former case their access to IT facilities may be disabled pending investigation.

3. EMAIL POLICY

3.1 When to use email

3.1.1 Use it in preference to paper to reach people quickly (saving time on photocopying / distribution) and to help reduce paper use. Think and check messages before sending (just as you would a letter or paper memo).

3.1.2 Use the phone (including voicemail if no reply) for urgent messages (email is a good backup in such instances).

3.2 Use of Distribution Lists

3.2.1 Only send Email to those it is meant for; do not broadcast (i.e. send to large groups of people using email aliases) unless absolutely necessary since this runs the risk of being disruptive. Unnecessary (or junk) email reduces computer performance and wastes disc space.

Use the standard aliases for work related communication only.

3.2.2 Keep Gaia Education's internal email aliases internal. If you are sending an email both to a Gaia Education alias and outside of Gaia Education, use the alias as a blind carbon copy (i.e. the bcc address option) so that the external recipient does not see the internal alias.

3.2.3 Do not broadcast emails with attachments to large groups of people- either note in the email where it is located for recipients to look, or include the text in the body of the email. Failure to do this puts unnecessary load on the network.

3.3 General points on email use

3.3.1 When publishing or transmitting information externally be aware that you are representing Gaia Education and could be seen as speaking on Gaia Education's behalf. Make it clear when opinions are personal. If in doubt, consult your line manager.

3.3.2 Check your inbox at regular intervals during the working day. Keep your in-tray fairly empty so that it just contains items requiring your action. Try to decide what to do with each email as you read it (e.g. delete it, reply to it, save the whole email in a folder, or extract just the useful information and save it somewhere logical).

3.3.3 Keep electronic files of electronic correspondence, only keeping what you need to. Do not print it off and keep paper files unless absolutely necessary.

3.3.4 Use prefixes in the subject box whenever appropriate.

3.3.5 Do not forward emails warning about viruses (they are invariably hoaxes).

3.4 Email etiquette

3.4.1 Being courteous is more likely to get you the response you want. Do address someone by name at the beginning of the message, especially if you are also copying another group of people.

3.4.2 Make your subject headers clear, relevant, and specific to your reader(s). For example, do not use subject headers like "stuff". Do not send a subject header of, say "accounts" to the accountant

3.4.3 Try to keep to one subject per email, especially if the content is complex. It is better for your reader(s) to have several emails on individual issues, which also makes them easy to file and retrieve later. One email covering a large variety of issues is likely to be misunderstood or ignored.

3.4.4 Using asterisks at each end of a word (e.g. *now*) is common practice for highlighting text. Capitals (e.g. NOW) can also be used to emphasise words, but should be used sparingly as it commonly perceived as 'shouting'.

3.4.5 Do not open an email unless you have a reasonably good expectation of what it contains, e.g. do open report.doc from an Internet colleague you know. Do not open explore.zip sent from an address you have never heard of, however tempting. This is one of the most effective means of protecting Gaia Education against email virus attacks.

3.4.6 Understand how forwarding an email works. If you forward mail, it appears (to the reader) to come from the originator (like passing on a sealed envelope). If you forward mail *and edit it* in the process, it appears to come from you - with the originator's details usually embedded in the message. This is to show that the original mail is no longer intact (like passing on an opened envelope).

3.5 Passwords

Do not change passwords without letting the IT administrator know the new password.

4. MISCELLANEOUS

4.1 Data transfer and storage on the network:

4.1.1 Keep master copies of important data on Gaia Education's network and not solely on your computer drive or floppy discs. Otherwise it will not be backed up and is therefore at risk.

4.1.2 Ask for advice from Webmaster if you need to store, transmit or handle large quantities of data, particularly images or audio and video. These large files use up disc space very quickly and can bring our network to a standstill.

4.1.3 Do not store personal (non- Gaia Education) files on Gaia Education's network.

4.2 Personal use of network

Use of the network for personal purposes (e.g. sending and receiving personal email, and browsing the Internet) is only permitted during lunch times as long as such use does not:

- Incur specific expenditure for Gaia Education

- Impact on your performance of your job
- Break the law
- Bring Gaia Education into disrepute.

5. GAIA EDUCATION WEBSITE PRIVACY POLICY

Gaia Education reserves the right to gather information relating to site usage. Any information gathered is primarily for internal use to allow us to refine and improve our customer service. Where information will be disclosed to a third party, we will, where possible, ensure that this is clearly indicated. This does not affect your statutory rights.

In addition, this site uses Google Analytics to track our site statistics.

The Gaia Education website contains links to external sites not owned or managed by us. We cannot be held responsible for the content or for the privacy of any external sites.

6. COOKIES

Cookies are pieces of data containing a unique, anonymous identifier, created when you visit a site. They are stored in the cookie directory of your hard drive and do not necessarily expire at the end of your session. Cookies used by the Gaia Education website contain no personal information about the user, nor does our website elicit or store any information from users other than the Internet Protocol address of the computer used to access the site. We use cookies for tracking our site statistics (Google Analytics). Cookies are not used for marketing and advertising purposes and no personal information will be disclosed to any other party.

Cookies on this site may safely be turned off by users without affecting how pages are displayed. Cookies can be disabled by adjusting your web browser settings. However if you choose not to accept cookies, some parts of our web site may not work properly.

Our cookies help us:

- Make our website work as you would expect
- Remember your settings during and between visits
- Improve the speed/security of the site
- Allow you to share pages with social networks
- Continuously improve our website for you

We do not use cookies to:

- Collect any personally identifiable information
(without your express permission)
- Collect any sensitive information (without your express permission)
- Pass data to advertising networks
- Pass personally identifiable data to third parties
- Pay sales commissions

If the settings on your software that you are using to view the Gaia Education website (your browser) are adjusted to accept cookies, we take this, and your continued use of our website, to mean that you are fine with this.

7. GAIA EDUCATION MAILING LIST PRIVACY POLICY

Gaia Education maintains the Gaia Education Mailing List to inform subscribers of news & information on Gaia Education activities and programmes and to provide them with other information that may be of interest.

The Gaia Education Mailing List is hosted by Activecampaign, a private company unaffiliated with the Gaia Education.

Please be advised that any information you share with Gaia Education or Activecampaign when you sign up for the mailing list will be available to Activecampaign. It is both Gaia Education's policy and Activecampaign's policy not to sell, disclose or rent this information to third parties.

To view Activecampaign's full privacy policy, please use the link below:

<http://www.activecampaign.com/help/privacy-policy/>

7. WEB INFORMATION

Gaia has its website and Content Management System with Joomla 2.5, a version most IT experts recommend. At the moment Joomla 2.5 is a safe platform however hacking/security is a constant battle between hackers/users. Gaia Education's website and all its Content Management is hosted by SiteGround server, which provides automatic updates and 24/7 technical support. Despite this, the Gaia website is still vulnerable. To ensure the security of the Gaia website, we also now use a separate security company: Sucuri. Sucuri aids in the maintenance of the website, sending out alerts and monitoring the website daily.



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Design for Sustainability

