



East Dunbartonshire Council

23 SECTION 5: A Parent and Carer's Guide to the Internet

East Dunbartonshire Council provides Internet access for children and young people. If you wish your child to make use of the service, you must sign a consent form. To ensure that the experience is as informative and as safe as possible, parents/carers are urged to read the following guidance and information.

The Internet

The Internet is an important resource, which enables computers to connect to computers all over the world via a telephone connection. Trained staff will be able to offer advice on how to access this resource, and to recommend websites for children and young people.

The Advantages

It is generally recognised that the best learning is done while having fun and sites on the World Wide Web can offer a fun and interactive learning experience. The World Wide Web makes it possible to do research, tour museums, play interactive games or get help with homework. Children and young people can also acquire important IT skills.

The Disadvantages

There are no guarantees to the quality or accuracy of material available on the World Wide Web and it is not always the best source of information. While East Dunbartonshire Council uses filtering systems to reduce the risk of coming across material generally considered inappropriate, no system is foolproof.

Personal safety is an important issue, as children and young people may come across sites which make them feel uncomfortable, or ask them to give personal details.

The Recommendations

While there is a risk in allowing children and young people access to the Internet, it can be greatly minimised by educating them in the principles of Safe Surfing, and by ensuring that parents and council services work together to apply common sense guidelines.

Parents/carers are encouraged to spend time on-line with their children. Before children use the library Internet facilities for the first time, they will be asked to complete a short quiz on how to make the safest use of the Internet. Young people in youth facilities will participate in group activity sessions to discuss the principles of safe surfing.

Ultimately the Internet use of children and young people is the responsibility of their parent/guardian.

Further Information

If you would like more information, there are a number of other resources available. Some suggestions can be found on the Council Website, bookmarked sites on Library PCs, or on a list available from the library. Alternatively, you can look at the following sites:

- <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>
- <http://www.nch.org.uk/information/index.php?i=209>
- <http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingcomputersandtheinternet/>