ICT Code of Practice

Brisbane Catholic Education

Information and Communication Technology Code of Practice

Introduction

Information and communication technology ("ICT") has become of critical importance to schools in facilitating and supporting teaching, learning and other administrative activities for teachers, students, parents and administrators. Acknowledging this, Brisbane Catholic Education ("BCE") provides computing, email, internet, intranet and other communication services to systemic schools and authorised personnel in the Archdiocese of Brisbane to support these activities.

This Code of Practice is designed to inform users of their rights, responsibilities and obligations when using these services and of BCE's requirements that all such resources are used in an ethical, legal and responsible manner. This Code of Practice also applies to the use of information and material that may be obtained through the use of the ICT resources and should be read in conjunction with the various application- specific policies, information sheets and other material and documentation referred to in this Code.

It is expected that all schools and users shall comply with the terms of this Code.

Principles

It is the general intent of this Code to reflect the principles that BCE:

(a)   provides access to ICT resources to eligible persons subject to need and available resources;

(b)   recognises its responsibilities in terms of the information provided through access to the resources;

(c)   recognises the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality and respect the personal rights of others;

(d)   recognises the importance of the cost-efficient use of the ICT services; and

(e)   requires users to engage in ethical, legal and responsible use of its ICT resources;

Users should be aware that the services provided by BCE are limited. Accordingly, use should be made of these resources considerately, given the requirements of all other users.

The nature of ICT is such that circumstances not contemplated by this Code and its related documents will inevitably arise. It is the intention that such circumstances should be dealt with in accordance with the spirit of these principles.

BCE is committed to providing ICT services which adhere to these principles.

Rationale: Beneficial intentions of the service

Authorised personnel in BCE schools are provided with access to selected Internet and Intranet facilities and services to support their roles in teaching and learning, research and administration. Access to these services and facilities is intended to facilitate increased learning opportunities for school personnel within the framework of the purpose and mission of the Catholic school through the provision of information and enhanced opportunities for communication and collaboration.

The ICT facilities that are provided offer powerful tools, which allow for communication and collaboration to take place both within schools and with the broader community. Used appropriately, these tools are able to enhance education, interaction and understanding. If used inappropriately, however, such tools may not only infringe the rights of others, but also be detract from and be detrimental to the learning process.

Disclaimer

While BCE will make every effort to ensure the availability and integrity of the ICT resources, the nature of the internet is such that BCE cannot guarantee that the resources will always be available on a continuous or interruption-free basis.

Despite its best efforts, BCE cannot guarantee that through the use of the resources, individuals will not come into contact (whether intentionally or otherwise) with material that may be obscene or offensive.

Users should be aware of these factors when accessing the ICT resources.

Scope

This Code is intended to apply to all users of BCE's ICT resources, regardless of how they are accessed. This includes access at all on-site computer labs, through users own hardware (for example, personal laptops, PDAs or other similar technology) whether wired or wireless or remote access over the internet through users' own resources.

While staff (in particular, ICT staff engaged by individual schools) may be called upon in the course of their duties to undertake activities beyond those permitted by the terms of this Code, it is expected that any such activities undertaken must be done in accordance with the spirit of this Code.

Ethical, Legal and Responsible Use of ICT Resources

BCE requires all users of its ICT resources to do so in an ethical, legal and responsible manner.

Users of BCE ICT resources must be aware that use of these facilities is subject to the full range laws that apply to the internet, communications and to the use of computers, as well as any other relevant laws and BCE policies. Such law and principles includes users' obligations in relation to, for example, copyright, other intellectual property, breach of confidence, defamation, privacy, bullying/harassment, vilification and anti-discrimination legislation, the creation of contractual obligations, and other civil and criminal laws. For further discussion in relation to users' rights and obligations in respect of these laws, please refer to the relevant sections in the BCE IT Practice Manual.

BCE's ICT resources must not be used for unauthorised commercial activities or unauthorised personal gain and actions performed using BCE ICT resources must comply with the terms of any licence agreed to for the use of software programs and other online resources.

In particular, BCE's ICT resources must not be used to copy, download, store or transmit material which infringes copyright, such as music files, movies, videos or any other form of media. The obligation of users in this regard are discussed below and in chapter * of the BCE IT Practice Manual.

Users should be aware that actions performed using computer and network resources, regardless of any disclaimers that might be made, ultimately reflect on their educational institution and community as a whole. This is particularly relevant where users post or submit material in a way that makes it publicly available over the internet.

While BCE is able to take limited preventative steps in these regards, schools should be diligent in both educating users as to there responsibilities under this Code and its related documentation and appropriately dealing with instances of breach.

Copyright and Other Intellectual Property Rights

The internet permits users easy access to a wide variety of information resources. Textual information, images, music, movies, software and other material that may be subject to copyright or other intellectual property rights are often readily available, Users should not, however, assume that just because such material is readily accessible, they are free to copy, download or use such material without the owner's permission.

Users must not, through the use of BCE ICT resources, copy, download, store or transmit material which infringes the intellectual property rights of others. Users are responsible for ensuring that they comply with this obligation.

Users are expressly forbidden from using BCE ICT resources for the use of file-sharing (for example, IRC, P2P, Bit Torrent, eMule/eDonkey) or other similar software or services that permit the transfer of files the subject of copyright.

For further information in relation to users' rights and responsibilities in relation to copyright and intellectual property, chapter * of the BCE IT Practice Manual discusses these issues in further details.

Access by Minors – Parental Consent

As a significant number of users of the BCE ICT resources are school students under the age of 18, parents should be appropriately informed and their consent obtained where children are being provided access to the internet.

For this reason, parents should be provided with a copy of this Code, the BCE IT Practice Manual and all other relevant material and invited to discuss the content with their children.

The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 requires Internet Service Providers (which includes BCE as ICT providers) to obtain permission from parents or guardians before providing a user account to a person under 18 years of age. As such, best practice dictates that prior to granting students access to ICT resources, a signed consent form, acknowledging that both parent and student have read and understood this Code and its related material should be obtained and retained on file.

Security and Privacy

BCE takes its security and privacy obligations in relation to providing ICT resources very seriously. BCE will take reasonable precaution to protect the security and privacy of users' ICT accounts and network and systems administrators treat the content of electronic communications and data as confidential. BCE employs various measures to protect the security of its ICT resources and of its user accounts. Individual schools are also expected to comply with security and privacy obligations as legislation and best practice dictate.

Users must, however, be aware that the operation and maintenance of ICT systems often requires the backup and caching of data, the logging of activity and the monitoring of general usage patterns and as such, complete confidentiality and privacy cannot be guaranteed. BCE (and individual schools) may also be required to inspect or provide copies of electronic communications where required to by law, or where the investigation of possible misuses of ICT resources is required.

Users also have a role to play in ensuring the security and privacy of information transmitted by use of the ICT resources. Users should (where appropriate) be issued with unique usernames and passwords, which should at all times be kept strictly confidential.

Users must protect systems, information and accounts by:

(a)   Choosing a secure password which is changed regularly (a secure password is one that is difficult to guess, for example, containing a combination of letter and numbers and not simply a name or date of birth)

(b)   Using access to ICT resources only as authorised;

(c)   Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of information to which they may come across through access to the resources;

(d)   Only downloading, installing or using authorised software;

(e)   reporting any breach or prospective breach of network security to the appropriate personnel; and

(f)   Performing a virus check on all email attachments and disks before opening.

Unacceptable conduct by users which could result in a breach of security or privacy includes:

(a)   Disclosing username and password details to another person;

(b)   Disclosing other private or confidential information to unauthorised persons;

(c)   Gaining unauthorised access to any systems (whether local or remote) by any means;

(d)   Using BCE ICT resources to attack or compromise another system or network;

(e)   Downloading, installing or using unauthorised software programs;

(f)   Deliberately installing computer viruses or other malicious programs; and

(g)   Accessing or intercepting others' electronic communications without permission.

Users should not, as a general rule, display personal information about themselves in a way that is publicly available. Where such disclosure is made through authorised avenues (for example, by the use of email or an official website), users should be aware that invasions of privacy may sometimes occur and it is outside BCE's control to prevent such instances from occurring.

Users are reminded that email should not be used to send sensitive and confidential information.

Specific Policies

The use of the following resources are subject to, in addition to this Code, their respective Policies, which must be read in conjunction with this Code:

(a)   World Wide Web;

(b)   Email; and

(c)   Web Publishing Tools.