

# **Model Policy Guidelines for Directing Students for Positive Use of Internet Including Social Networking Sites and Whatsapp**

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Objectives & missions of the policy guidelines: To protect children from adversities of internet and educating them for a positive use of internet and social-networking sites.

Scope of the policy guidelines: It may be used to educate children from 1<sup>st</sup> Standard to plus 2. It may also be used to provide guidance for teachers and counsellors to help children for positive usage of internet and social networking sites.

The guidelines:

1. Every school must encourage children to participate in debates or discussions on internet rights, positive and negative effects of the same. This may be made as a part of the subject of computer science, or as a part of C.C.
2. Junior students (from the age group of 4-8) must be encouraged to take part in awareness building sessions. In such sessions, the students may be shown how to handle the devices properly and why not to switch on devices without parent's supervision or permission. For this purpose the schools can consider making small skits with the help of older children and the teachers, or use movie clippings or other audio-visual learning materials.
3. Students from the age group of 8-13 must be encouraged to attend awareness sessions where they may be taught how to use the internet for positive gain. Given the fact that many study materials and books provide internet links or pages on specific subjects, the students may be encouraged to open such sites in the presence of the teachers. Parent-teacher-student sessions must be made to sensitise parents about the positive use of internet and digital communication technology. Students may be introduced to issues including grooming by paedophiles, values of good talk and bad talk in the internet etc. Students may be slowly introduced to social networking sites. It is not necessary to direct the students to open their accounts. But the students may be asked to take part in discussions on the policy guidelines or terms and conditions that are

offered by social networking sites, email service providers etc, and then create their own accounts in the social networking sites.

4. Students from the age group of 14-17 may be encouraged to open accounts in the social networking sites and add their parents and teachers in their friend circles. They may be encouraged to create their own safety rules and privacy rules and discuss about them with younger students in class debates or awareness sessions. Students may also be encouraged to access informative pages in the social networking sites for gaining more knowledge.
5. It is important to teach students about rational coping mechanisms if and when they accidentally fall victims of cyber crimes. They must be taught how to use the safety tools to protect themselves, when and how to contact the principals, teachers and parents.
6. Schools must arrange for workshops on guiding students for positive usage of internet, which may include sessions on copyright violations as well. In such workshops, students may be encouraged to express their thoughts. Such workshops may be conducted with the police personnel, cyber crime experts, and NGOs as resource persons.
7. Senior students (from the age group of 16-18) may be encouraged to create their own blogs or vlogging sites either on their own or as group effort to show case positive usage of internet.
8. However, it must be noted that this policy guideline should not be used if the schools wish to use it as the sole guideline for separate types of offences. The author offers to cooperate with the schools to build up unique policy guidelines on the basis of this model policy guideline depending upon the need of every organisation. It is hoped that if the above guidelines are adopted, crimes targeting children by children and adults may be curbed.

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