

## **iTrust @ Finborough School**

In our unrelenting focus on the development of character It is our responsibility to nurture within our students the best possible interaction with the virtual world of the internet including their preferred forms social media and their use of devices to access communications, content, and connections.

Internet safety approaches in schools whilst designed to educate, often focus on control and rigid enforced boundaries, built on a foundation of low trust.

Aligned with our ground-breaking character centred positive behaviour approach at Finborough School we are taking a different approach working with our students in partnership with parents to foster and sustain good 'digital character'.

This approach has been developed in partnership with students and parents from across the school to ensure a fully joined up approach.

This partnership are essential for iTrust to operate successfully and for it to have a fundamental impact on our children and teens ongoing development of good 'digital character'.

This approach is designed to ensure our children and young adults have a sustained a strong positive relationship with both the adults at school and their parents centred on mutual trust around their immersion in the online world and their use of devices.

This iTrust approach will be shared with students across the school in an age-appropriate manner and will be a regular focus of the Finborough Flyer as part of every students character development experience at Finborough School.

Phones and to some extent tablets are too quickly and frequently demonised as we focus on dependence and screen time, however it is far more effective to support and encourage our children and teens to engage in a wealth of real offline activities as this is the most effective way to get them to disconnect.

It is abundantly evident that our children and teens find it difficult to experience even short periods of low stimulation, such is the pace of information flow in the world we now live in. They therefore need to be coached and supported to have greater motivation and creativity to invent and engage with real life activity and social interaction.

Building good 'digital character' is the key to ensuring our children and teens do not go onto have a debilitating unhealthy dependence on their devices and phones particularly. This is evidently a major societal issue which is undoubtedly hampering motivation, productivity and success. Giving our children and teens the deep-set character tools to be better than this WILL be a huge advantage for them.

At Finborough School children will access the internet and use a wealth of digital resources as part of their learning both during the school day and at home. Pre-Prep and Prep School students will develop their understanding and engagement with the virtual world via devices provided to them at school. We feel very strongly that children of Pre-Prep and Prep School age are not ready to have their own internet enabled tablet or phone and should not access any form of social media including gaming platforms such a Roblox.

Senior School Students will have their own laptop or tablet for learning and whilst they may have a phone with them this MUST be turned off with linked devices such as smart watches set up, so they do not receive notifications throughout the whole school day. This is to ensure best focus on learning whilst at school. Phones may be of value in some learning activities; however this will always be at the discretion of the teacher.

Sixth Form students should always be role models of good 'digital character'.

The internet does pose risk through 'strangers' seeking to improperly engage with children and teens coupled with easy access to an unlimited stream of inappropriate material. However, if we have a strong positive relationship founded on trust, our children and teens will exercise their evident moral boundaries and share with the adults in their lives concerns, rather than hide them away and seek guidance from other less scrupulous sources.

The complexity of digital communications will lead to mistakes, however a good 'digital character' centred on kindness, integrity and humility with firm moral foundations will enable positive choices and interactions in most cases.

Our objective must be to nurture in our children and teens good 'digital character' that will enable them to navigate the world they live in and that will continue to rapidly evolve across their lifetimes.

Our iTrust approach sets out what good 'digital character' looks like alongside the concerning opposite of this with clear consistent action to support our children and teens when they show us a character gap.

Errant 'digital character' can be very damaging both immediately and into the future, so our actions to coach and support improvement need to be very clear. This is not about punishment, rather a bespoke individualised approach to ensure a sustained improvement when any form of poor 'digital character' has been evident.

Children and teens at Finborough School MUST recognise that poor 'digital character' demonstrated through their actions will result in consequences, which are fully transparent and agreed and that these are solely designed to develop improved 'digital character' to ensure sustained better choices and iTrust.

### **Good Digital Character**

- Always kind, considerate and respectful online.
- Only share content and images online that are appropriate, and you would be happy for the key adults in your life to view.
- Will not engage in any way (including social media) with 'strangers' (individuals not actually known to me and my parents).
- Will always tell the truth regarding device use and online activity.
- Recognise the vital importance of creating a positive long term digital footprint (digital reputation).
- Understand, appreciate, respect and adhere to the schools' expectations around device use for best learning, particularly phones being switched off during the school day and notifications deactivated unless being used for learning directed by a teacher.
- Understand, appreciate, respect and adhere to parents expectations around device and internet access at home and in their care.
- Have strong mutually respectful relationships with parents and adults at school that ensure good digital behaviour.
- Respect age restrictions and recognise what content is not appropriate for you to access and view.
- Share any concerns no matter how small about your interactions and content you see online.
- Genuinely value being trusted because of consistent good 'digital character', recognising the huge importance of sustaining this.
- Self-monitor and self-control screentime ensuring a positive balance with 'real' experiences.
- Self-recognise signs of dependence and not be obsessive about any aspect of internet use, including gaming, social media and entertainment.

- Recognise the importance of good sleep and that screen use too close to bedtime and during the night will adversely affect sleep quality.

ALL students at Finborough School MUST commit in an age-appropriate manner to both their class teacher (Pre-Prep and Prep) and Tutor (Senior and Sixth form) and parents to having good 'digital character' and agreeing to use restriction consequences and a coaching programme to improve their 'digital character' if they demonstrate a poor 'digital character' through their behaviour at home or school.

They MUST formally agree to the following statement at the start of every school year, which is adapted for younger children and those with SEND to access and understand.

### **iTrust Pledge**

*"I fully commit without reservation to sustain a good 'digital character' as set out in Finborough School's iTrust approach. I recognise and fully commit to the restriction consequences of showing any form of poor 'digital character' and will engage positively in support and character coaching to enable me to regain iTrust."*

### **Poor Digital Character**

- Being repeatedly unkind and disrespectful online.
- Sharing inappropriate images or content of yourself or others.
- Engaging without reservation online with 'strangers' (individuals I and my parents do not know).
- Being dishonest about your device use and activity online.
- Have no regard for your digital footprint (digital reputation).
- Do not show understanding, appreciate respect and adhere to expectations around device use at school for best learning, particularly that phones MUST be switched off and notifications on other devices deactivated at all times during the day.
- Do not show understanding, appreciate respect and adhere to parents' expectations around device use and internet access at home.
- Have little or no interest in a mutually respectful relationships with parents and adults at school around device use and internet access.
- Pay little or no attention to age restrictions / recommendations online.
- See their online life as being totally private and separate from parents and other key adults in their lives.
- Has limited or no interest or value in being trusted with devices and online access.
- Has limited or no self-control over screen time.
- Are evidently obsessed with their world online, developing a consuming defiant and at times deviant dependence on gaming, social media and entertainment.

Good 'digital character' results in itrust, which is freedom to use devices and the internet with little if any monitoring required. This is liberating, enables the highest level of safety, establishes an excellent digital reputation and prepares students for a sustained excellent online and real life into the future.

Poor 'digital character' demonstrated at school or home requires clear and consistent intervention, consequence and coaching to make rapid improvements that MUST be sustained.

Our children and teens will at times make poor choices and it is our responsibility as the adults in their lives to recognise and evaluate their 'digital character' in these situations and take consistent joined up action.

At Finborough, actions which indicate poor 'digital character' will be addressed using our positive character centred behaviour approach. Where a bespoke character coaching programme will be set up and agreed with the individual and parents to ensure change, resulting in the improvement of 'digital character' to enable iTrust.

This will include device use and possession alongside online access restrictions coupled with a clear timescale to show improved 'digital character' and regain iTrust.

This approach will be joined up between home and school, to enable rapid improvement and that children and teens really are set on a path of sustained good 'digital character'.