

East Riding NUT News

November / December 2008



Working for Local Teachers

Editor: Brian Swinton

Care with your computer a number of members have recently had disciplinary problems due to alleged misuse or inappropriate use of school equipment.

Please take heed that over the last year or so several NUT members in East Yorkshire have been taken to task regarding issues involving the use of ICT equipment. These cases fall into a few distinct types:

1 Contacting Pupils

Some colleagues are now communicating with pupils via email—allowing them to submit coursework perhaps or other legitimate reasons. If you wish or need to do this first check your school policy about this. In any case do not use a personal email address, only ever use a school allocated email address and if you ever need to reply to a pupil make sure you keep a copy and keep very strictly to business and school policy. Remember school email systems are not private, the messages can be visible to managers. If you can avoid it don't use email with pupils.

Never communicate with a pupil by mobile phone either calling or texting. Many schools do operate a system that alerts parents/carers to issues by text. By all means use that system when necessary but never let a parent or pupil have your personal mobile number no matter how convenient it may seem. If you are on a school trip use a school mobile.

2 Use of the internet

We all make considerable use of the net for thousands of different legitimate reasons. Most schools now have a policy regarding the use of internet facilities for personal reasons on school premises and during school hours. Please be sensible, check your school policy and don't ever allow pupils to see you bidding on ebay at the last minute for that special item you must have. It makes you extremely vulnerable to complaints. Most school networks have the facility to give detailed usage information for each staff member to the manager or Head. This can include sites visited and the precise times—during a lesson perhaps.

If you have a school laptop that you are permitted to take home, again check the school policy regarding its use at home. Be aware that some school anti virus systems only work whilst the machine is connected to the school network. Your school laptop will have to be checked over, updated etc from time to time. Don't ever store your private passwords on your school computer. Yes it does make it easier for you to use but what if it was stolen from the classroom? If you have to hand back a school machine make sure all your

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documents are removed, erase all private details and delete all cookies. If in doubt consult an expert. Don't let your children or other family members use a school laptop unless you are watching. They may visit sites that could be embarrassing to you at a later date! Do not store inappropriate materials on it or visit inappropriate web sites yourself with it. Erased browsing histories can sometimes be recovered! Family photos of your children playing in the bath stored on a school computer can be misunderstood...

3 Digital photos of pupils

Your school will have a policy regarding photos of pupils. Follow it to the letter. Make sure you have the relevant permissions/wavers required before taking pictures of trips, activities, whatever. If photos are required for coursework etc make sure they are stored on school equipment and mention it to your network manager so that they know why they are there. Avoid taking photos of pupils that could be deemed to be inappropriate. If in doubt don't do it.

4 Social networking sites

My advice to all members regarding facebook, youtube etc is don't go there at all. It is safest not to have a presence, blog or anything else that pupils can access or see. If you do network in this way then never invite pupils to be your "friends". They could easily take advantage of your trust. If you see your name being taken in vain on such sites, or worse still videos taken on phones by pupils in lessons, contact the site and have them removed.

If you have other advice on this or any subject that you would like to share with

members please let me know. You can email me:

brian.swinton@eastridingnut.org

Christmas is coming!

After the longest possible Autumn term the holidays are in sight. Watch out if you are planning Christmas treats for pupils. If you plan showing videos or DVDs check the age rating is not older than your class and check that you are not infringing copyright.

Next Year

I am planning to run some sessions for school reps during the Spring term. If you would like to be involved perhaps you could let me know what day of the week, times & places would be good or impossible. For this or any other NUT related reason contact:

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Officers for next year

Nominations for local officers must be received by Martin Reed by 31st December 2008 at the address below.

The posts are:

Secretary.
2 Assistant Secretaries.
Vice - President.
Treasurer.
Membership Secretary.
ULF Representative.
Health and Safety Representative.
TBS Officer.
Beverley Casework Officer.
Equal opportunities Officer.
Press Officer.