USE OF INTERNET

As part of the school's Information Technology programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. Before being allowed to the use the Internet all pupils must obtain parental permission. Please sign and return the *Use of Internet Permission Form* as evidence of your approval and your child's acceptance of the school rules on this matter.

Access to the Internet will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with other internet users throughout the world. Families should be warned that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate or potentially offensive to some people. To help minimise the risks which may arise from internet use filtering software has been installed which blocks thousands of inappropriate websites and prevents inappropriate items being accessed.

Whilst our aim for Internet use is to further educational goals and objectives pupils may find ways to access other materials as well. We believe that the benefits to pupils from the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end the school supports and respects each family's rights to decide whether or not to apply for access.

During school teachers will guide pupils towards appropriate materials. Outside of school families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio and other potentially offensive media.

We would be grateful if you could read the enclosed guidance documents and complete the Permission Form.

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

What is the Internet?

The Internet is an electronic information highway connecting many thousands of computers all over the work and millions of individual subscribers. This global '*network of networks'* is not governed by any entity. This means that there is no limit or checks on the kind of information that is maintained by and accessible to Internet users. The educational value of appropriate information on the internet is substantial. Because, however, the internet is composed of information from a vast array of sources world-wide it includes some material that is not of educational value in the context of the school It may be abusive, profane, sexually explicit, racist or illegal. In order to guard children from any inherent dangers it is the joint responsibility of the school and parents and guardians to educate children about their responsibility when using the Internet.

What is Electronic Mail?

This is merely a way of sending messages from one person to another via the Internet. Each internet user has a unique email address and may send and receive text, picture and even video messages each time they connect to the internet. Internet email addresses are usually provided along with a school's connection to the internet and normally pupils will not have their own email address.

Advice for Parents

Parents should:

- Discuss with their children the rules for using the Internet and decide together when, how long and what comprises appropriate use.
- Get to know the sites their children visit and talk to them about what they are learning.
- Ensure that they give their agreement before their children give out personal identifying information in any electronic communication on the internet, such as a picture, an address, a phone number, the school name or financial information such as credit card or bank details. In this way they can protect their children (and themselves) from unwanted or unacceptable overtures from strangers, from unplanned expenditure and from fraud.
- Encourage their children not to respond do any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages and to tell their teacher or parent/guardian if they receive any such messages or images.

Rules for use of the Internet

- Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the Internet just as they are in the classroom. General school rules apply.

- The Internet is provided for pupils to conduct research and communicate with others. Permission from parents/guardians is required. Remember that access is a privilege and not a right and that access requires responsibility. Children abusing this will be banned from the use of the Internet.

- Computer storage areas and floppy disks will be treated as private property. Staff may review files and communications to ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on servers or disks would always be private.

- During school, teachers will guide pupils towards appropriate materials.

- The following are not permitted:
    1) Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures;
    2) Using obscene language;
    3) Harassing, insulting or attacking others;
    4) Damaging computers, computer systems or computer networks;
    5) Violating copyright laws;
    6) Using others' passwords;
    7) Trespassing in others' folders, work or files;
    8) Intentionally wasting limited resources.
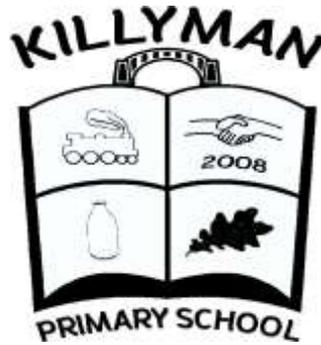
Use of Internet – Permission Form

As the parent/guardian of _____ *(pupil)* I grant permission for my child to use electronic mail and the Internet. I understand that pupils will be held accountable for their own actions. I also understand that some materials on the Internet may be objectionable and I accept responsibility for setting standards for my child to follow when selecting, sharing and exploring information and media.

Signed_____ *(Parent/Guardian)* Date _____

Name of Pupil _____

NB Please inform the school in writing should you wish to withdraw your consent.