

NEWLANDS GIRLS' SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT



IT Security Policy

LAST UPDATED AND REVIEWED	School Business Manager IT Network Manager	January 2026
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POLICY TYPE	Statutory
REVIEW FREQUENCY	Annually

RESPONSIBLE	
Leadership Team	School Business Manager
Governing Committee	Resources, Audit and Risk

APPROVED/MEETING	Resources, Audit and Risk Meeting	2 nd February 2026
UPDATED:	Shared / One Drive	4 th February 2026

Courage Commitment Compassion

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of the Policy is to protect the institution's information assets from all threats, whether internal or external, deliberate or accidental.

1.2. It is the policy of Newlands Girls' School to ensure that:

- information will be protected against unauthorised access
- confidentiality of information will be assured
- integrity of information will be maintained
- regulatory and legislative requirements will be met
- business continuity plans will be produced, maintained and tested
- IT security training will be available to all staff

2. Policy Objectives

2.1. Against this background there are three main objectives of the IT Security Policy:

- to ensure that equipment, data, staff, governors and students are adequately protected against any action that could adversely affect the school;
- to ensure that users are aware of and fully comply with all relevant legislation;
- to create and maintain within the school a level of awareness of the need for ICT security to be an integral part of the day to day operation so that all staff understand the need for ICT security and their own responsibilities in this respect.

3. Application

3.1. The IT Security Policy is intended for all school staff who are either controllers of the system or who are users and supporters of the school's administration and curriculum Information Technology (IT) systems or data. Pupils using the school's IT systems or data are covered by the school's 'Acceptable Use Policy' documents.

3.2. For the purposes of this document the terms 'IT' (or 'IT system'), 'IT data' and 'IT user' are defined as follows:

'IT' (or 'IT system') means any device or combination of devices used for the storage, processing accessing and distribution of data and includes but is not exclusive to: workstation (tablet, netbook, notebook, desktop/tower PC etc.), mobile device, cash till, server, cloud computing or any other similar device;

'IT data' means any information stored and processed within the IT system and includes programs, text, pictures and sound;

'IT user' applies to any School employee, student or other authorised person who uses the school's IT systems and/or data.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1. The IT Security Policy relies on management and user actions to ensure that its aims are achieved. Consequently, roles and responsibilities are defined below.

4.2. Governing Body

4.2.1. The governing body has the ultimate corporate responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with the legislative requirements relating to the use of IT systems and for disseminating policy on IT security and other IT related matters. In practice, the day-to-day responsibility for implementing these legislative requirements rests with the Headteacher.

4.3. Headteacher

4.3.1. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the legislative requirements relating to the use of IT systems are met and that the school's IT Security Policy, as may be amended from time to time, is adopted and maintained by the school. He/she is also responsible for ensuring that any special IT security measures relating to the school's IT facilities are applied and documented as an integral part of the Policy.

4.3.2. The day to day functions are delegated to the Network Systems Manager, who must be nominated in writing by the Headteacher. This would take the form of an item in a job description.

4.3.3. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation are complied with fully by the school. This is represented by appointing an external Data Protection Officer (DPO) and the School Business Manager as the Data Protection Lead who then ensures that the:

- registrations under the General Data Protection Regulation are up-to-date and cover all uses being made of personal data

4.3.4. In addition, the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that users of systems and data are familiar with the relevant aspects of the Policy and to ensure that the appropriate controls are in place for staff to comply with the Policy. This is particularly important with the increased use of computers and laptops at home. Staff should exercise extreme care in the use of personal data at home to ensure legislation is not contravened, in particular the General Data Protection Regulation.

4.4. Network Systems Manager

4.4.1. The 'Network Systems Manager' is responsible for the school's IT equipment, systems and data held on systems under IT Staff administration and will have direct control over these assets and their use, including responsibility for controlling access to these assets and for defining and documenting the requisite level of protection. The Network Systems Manager will be an employee of the school.

4.4.2. The Network Systems Manager will administer the practical aspects of IT protection and ensure that various functions are performed, such as maintaining the integrity of the data, producing the requisite back-up copies of data and protecting the physical access to systems and data.

4.4.3. In line with these responsibilities, the Network Systems Manager will be the official point of contact for IT security issues and as such is responsible for notifying the School Business Manager or Headteacher of any suspected or actual breach of IT security occurring within the school. The School Business Manager or Headteacher should ensure that details of the

suspected or actual breach are recorded and made available to Internal Audit upon request. The School Business Manager or Headteacher must advise Internal Audit of any suspected or actual breach of IT security pertaining to financial irregularity.

4.4.4. It is vital, therefore, that the Network Systems Manager is fully conversant with the IT Security Policy and maintains an up to date knowledge of best practice and follows the associated approved practices.

4.5. All IT Staff

4.5.1. All IT staff are responsible for maintaining, repairing and proactively supporting the IT System so that it can meet the requirements of the IT Security Policy.

4.5.2. All IT Staff will also monitor the IT System for breaches of security and inform the Network Systems Manager or the School Business Manager in their absence.

4.5.2 All IT Staff must have access to relevant training on an annual basis. Specific Security Systems or area should be given when systems are implemented or areas needed. Their updates should be integrated into the annual training program.

4.6. Users

4.6.1. Users are those employees, students, governors or authorised guests of the school who make use of the IT systems to support them in their work. All users of the school's IT systems and data must comply with the requirements of this IT Security Policy. The school has an Acceptable Use Policy which summarises the responsibilities of users of the school's IT systems.

4.6.2. Users are responsible for notifying the Network Systems Manager of any suspected or actual breach of IT security. In exceptional circumstances, users may report any such breach directly to the School Business Manager, Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

4.6.3. Users are responsible for the equipment they use including:

- Physical security
- Security of data
- Their own passwords
- Saving their local files/work to locations that are backed up as they are directed to

5. Management of the Policy

5.1. Sufficient resources should be allocated each year to ensure the security of the school's IT systems and to enable users to comply fully with the legal requirements and policies covered in this policy. If insufficient resources are available to fully implement this policy, then the potential risks must be documented and reported to Governors by the School Business Manager/ Headteacher.

5.2. Suitable training for all IT users and documentation to promote the proper use of IT systems will be provided annually, with specific training requirements addressed in the interval if required. Users will also be given adequate information on the policies, procedures and facilities to help safeguard these systems and related data. A record of the training provided through the

school to each individual user will be maintained. Maintenance of this record should be the responsibility of the nominated 'training administrator'.

5.3. In addition, users will be made aware of the value and importance of such IT systems and data, particularly data of a confidential or sensitive nature, and be made aware of their personal responsibilities for IT security.

5.4. To help achieve these aims, the relevant parts of the IT Security Policy and any other information on the use of particular facilities and techniques to protect the systems or data will be disseminated to users.

5.5. The Headteacher must ensure that adequate procedures are established in respect of the IT security implications of personnel changes. Suitable measures should be applied that provide for continuity of IT security when staff vacate or occupy a post. These measures as a minimum must include:

- a record that new staff have been issued with, have read the appropriate documentation relating to IT security, and have signed the list of rules;
- a record that those rights have been amended or withdrawn due to a change to responsibilities or termination of employment. This also applies record when access rights are newly requested for an individual or role. And whether they were granted.

5.6 The Policy is to be reviewed annually and if an incident occurs, or new systems, devices or processes are introduced that impact IT Security. Regulatory guidance or change can also initiate a review.

6. Physical Security

6.1.1. Adequate consideration should be given to the physical security of rooms containing IT equipment (including associated cabling). The server rooms should be locked when open access, by parents for example, is in progress.

6.1.2. The Network Systems Manager should ensure appropriate arrangements are applied for the removal of any IT equipment from its normal location and thus must be informed of any such moves. These arrangements should take into consideration the risks associated with the removal and the impact these risks might have.

6.2. Equipment siting

6.2.1. Reasonable care must be taken in the siting of computer screens, keyboards, printers or other similar devices. Wherever possible, and depending upon the sensitivity of the data, users should observe the following precautions:

- devices are positioned in such a way that information stored or being processed cannot be viewed by persons not authorised to know the information. Specific consideration should be given to the siting of devices on which confidential or sensitive information is processed or retrieved;
- staff and students should not reposition IT equipment without consulting IT Staff;
- equipment is sited to avoid environmental damage from causes such as dust & heat;

- users have been instructed to avoid leaving computers logged-on when unattended. All devices when not in use should be locked using the system software provided to password protect the device.
- users have been instructed not to leave hard copies of sensitive data unattended on desks.

6.2.2. The same rules apply when accessing the School's IT System or IT data away from school, e.g. at a User's home or visiting another school.

6.3. Inventory

6.3.1. The School Business Manager, with the Network Systems Manager, shall ensure that an inventory of IT equipment is maintained.

7. Legitimate Use

7.1. The school's IT facilities must not be used in any way that breaks the law.

7.2. Such breaches include, but are not limited to:

- making, distributing or using unlicensed software or data;
- making or sending threatening, offensive, or harassing messages;
- creating, possessing or distributing obscene material;
- unauthorised personal use of the school's computer facilities.

7.3. Private Hardware & Software

7.3.1. Dangers can occur from the use of unlicensed software and software infected with a computer virus. It is therefore vital that any private software permitted to be used on the school's equipment is acquired from a responsible source and is used strictly in accordance with the terms of the licence. The use of all private hardware for school purposes must be approved and recorded by the Network Systems Manager.

7.4. IT Security Facilities

7.4.1. The school's IT systems and data will be protected using appropriate security arrangements outlined in the rest of Section 7. In addition, consideration should also be given to including appropriate processing controls such as audit trails, input validation checks, control totals for output, reports on attempted unauthorised access, etc.

7.4.2. For new systems, it is recommended that such facilities be confirmed at the time of installing the system.

7.5. Authorisation

7.5.1. Only persons authorised by the Network Systems Manager and in full compliance with the school's IT policies, are allowed to use the school's IT systems. The Network Systems Manager will ensure the user is fully aware of the extent to which an IT User may make use of the IT System.

7.5.2. Failure to establish the limits of any authorisation may result in the school being unable to use the sanctions of the Computer Misuse Act 1990. Not only will it be difficult to demonstrate that

a user has exceeded the authority given, it will also be difficult to show definitively who is authorised to use a computer system.

7.5.3. Access eligibility will be reviewed continually, including remote access for support. In particular the relevant access capability will be removed when a person leaves the employment of the school. In addition, access codes, user identification codes and authorisation rules will be reviewed whenever a user changes duties.

7.5.4. Failure to change access eligibility and passwords will leave the IT systems vulnerable to misuse.

7.6. Passwords

7.6.1. The level of password control will be defined by the Network Systems Manager based on the value and sensitivity of the data involved, including the possible use of “time out” passwords where a terminal/PC is left unused for a defined period.

7.6.2. Passwords for staff users will be a minimum of 12 characters

7.6.2.1 Encryption passwords MUST be a minimum of 8 characters, including a mix of letters (upper and lower case) and numbers.

7.6.3. Passwords should be memorised and if written down MUST not be kept with the device in any form.

7.6.4. Passwords should protect access to all IT systems. The BIOS area of IT devices should be protected with a password to restrict unauthorised access.

7.6.5. A password must be changed if it is affected by a suspected or actual breach of security or if there is a possibility that such a breach could occur, such as:

- when a password holder leaves the school or is transferred to another post;
- when a password may have become known to a person not entitled to know it. E.g. through a phishing attack.

7.6.6. The need to change one or more passwords will be determined by the risk of the security breach.

7.6.7. Users must not reveal their password to anyone. The Network Systems Manager will keep a log of all encryption passwords in a secure area to which only they and the IT staff they authorise have access.

7.6.8. Users must not use the same password across multiple IT systems and Platforms. Their Network/Windows/Microsoft365 password must not be used in any other capacity.

7.7. Security of the network

7.7.1. Only devices used by authorised users should be permitted to be connected to the network, either through wired or wireless connectivity.

7.7.2. Where devices are connected to the network using wireless, the wireless network should be secure; as a minimum this should be done using WPA. Open Access Wireless Access Points will be used to supply internet access to pupils and guests, but not to the school's network.

7.7.3. Encryption is applied to wireless networks; encryption keys should be kept secure and remain the property of the Network System Manager and must not be shared without written permission.

7.7.4. Mobile devices may with permission connect to the network but in full compliance with the IT policies and this permission may be withdrawn at any time. The owner/user, or the responsible parties, of a mobile device connecting to the internet should be informed the device's online activity will be monitored and logged by the School's Internet Service Provider.

7.7.5 Logging by relevant systems of their usage and access should be enabled by default to aid investigation should they be needed.

7.8. Encryption

7.8.1. All devices that have access to data attached to the IT System should be fully encrypted where possible

Devices subject to encryption may include:

- Laptops
- PDAs
- Smartphones
- USB Pendrives/Memory cards
- Desktops

7.8.2. Where technology prevents the use of encryption (e.g. SD Memory Cards used in Digital Cameras) then any data deemed highly confidential or sensitive should not be stored on these devices.

7.9. Filtering of the Internet

7.9.1. Access to the internet for children and staff is filtered using the Smoothwall filtering system.

7.9.2 It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to monitor the effectiveness of filtering at the school. They have delegated this task to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Network Systems Manager, who will report any technical issues to the web-filtering provider and the Senior Leadership Team.

7.9.3 Where breaches of web filtering have occurred, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and / or Network Systems Manager should inform the Senior Leadership Team and assist with assessing the risk of continued access.

7.9.4 Staff Remote Access to the onsite school network is achieved using a dedicated VPN Client of the site Firewall. The VPN Client is only installed on devices issued to staff authorised to remote access the network. The authorised staff must login to the VPN Client to enable access.

7.10. Backups

7.10.1. In order to ensure that essential services and facilities are restored as quickly as possible following an IT system failure, back-up copies of stored data will be taken at regular intervals as determined by the Network System Manager, dependent upon the importance and quantity of the data concerned.

7.10.2. Data essential for the day to day running and management of the school should be stored on the school's network or Cloud services.

7.10.3. Management Information System (MIS) and Financial Systems are hosted and backed up off site by 3rd party cloud solutions. Specific on-site data/files are backed up digitally and the backups are stored on site.

7.10.4. Instructions for re-installing data or files from backup should be fully documented and security copies should be regularly tested to ensure that they enable the systems/relevant file to be re-loaded in cases of system failure.

7.10.4 Specific onsite network data areas are backed up onsite and to a third-party Cloud Backup solution. This gives data 256-bit AES encryption at rest and in transit from a dedicated onsite server running Cloud provider software to the Cloud provider.

7.11. Operating System Patching

7.11.1. The Network Systems Manager will ensure that all machines defined as part of the IT System are patched according to those releases distributed by the manufacturers of the operating systems.

7.12. Virus Protection

7.12.1. The school will use appropriate Anti-virus/Anti-malware software for all school IT systems, including Endpoint devices.

7.12.2. All Users should take precautions to avoid malicious software that may destroy or corrupt data.

7.12.3. The school will ensure that every IT user is aware that any device in the IT system (PC, laptops, netbook, PDA, tills) with a suspected or actual computer virus infection must be disconnected from the network and be reported immediately to the Network Systems Manager who must take appropriate action, including removing the source of infection.

7.12.4. The governing body could be open to a legal action for negligence should a person suffer as a consequence of a computer virus on school equipment.

7.13. Disposal of Waste

7.13.1. Disposal of waste IT media such as print-outs or USB sticks will be made with due regard to the sensitivity of the information they contain. For example, paper will be shredded if any confidential information from it could be derived.

7.13.2. The Data Protection Act requires that adequate mechanisms be used when disposing of personal data.

7.14. Disposal of Equipment

7.14.1. The Data Protection Act requires that any personal data held on a part of the IT system that is due to be disposed of is destroyed.

7.14.2. Prior to the transfer or disposal of any IT equipment the Network Systems Manager must ensure that any personal data or software is obliterated from the machine if the recipient organisation is not authorised to receive the data, or that that the disposing organisation has a contractual obligation to destroy the data and provide certificated assurance of destruction. Where the recipient organisation is authorised to receive the data, they must be made aware of the existence of any personal data to enable the requirements of the Data Protection Act to be met. Normal write-off rules as stated in Financial Regulations apply. Any IT equipment must be disposed of in accordance with WEEE regulations.

7.14.3. It is important to ensure that any copies of the software remaining on a machine being relinquished are legitimate. Care should be taken to avoid infringing software and data copyright and licensing restrictions by supplying unlicensed copies of software inadvertently. The school should maintain a regularly updated asset register of licenses and should indicate when licenses have been transferred from one part of the IT system to another.

7.15. Repair of Equipment

7.15.1. If a machine, or its permanent storage (usually a disk drive), is required to be repaired by a third party the significance of any data held must be considered. If data is particularly sensitive it must be removed from hard disks and stored on other media for subsequent reinstallation, if possible. The school will ensure that third parties are currently registered under the Data Protection Act as personnel authorised to see data and as such are bound by the same rules as school staff in relation to not divulging the data or making any unauthorised use of it.

8. Security Incidents

8.1. All suspected or actual breaches of IT security shall be reported to the Network Systems Manager or the School Business Manager in their absence, who should ensure a speedy and effective response to be made to an IT security incident, including securing useable evidence of breaches and evidence of any weakness in existing security arrangements. They must also establish the operational or financial requirements to restore the IT service quickly.

The responding IT Staff are to keep the School Business Manager, and the Head Teacher, or their available Deputy, informed of incident progress, the need for communication to stakeholders and the requisition or needed acquisition of additional resources. These events should be logged where possible.

8.2 The Network System Manager will keep a log of all cyber security incidents which will be regularly reviewed by the School Business Manager who will report on this to the Headteacher and Audit & Risk Committee.

8.2. It is important that users are given positive encouragement to be vigilant towards any suspicious event relating to IT use.

8.3. It should be recognised that the school and its officers may be open to a legal action for negligence if a person or organisation should suffer as a consequence of a breach of IT security within the school where insufficient action had been taken to resolve the breach.

9. Acceptable Use Policy

9.1. The school's IT Acceptable Use Agreements apply to all school staff, students and third parties who use either or both of these facilities. The agreement covers the use of Email, the Internet, services accessed through the Internet and local file and network usage. The conditions of use are explained in the agreement. All school staff accessing these facilities must be issued with a copy of the IT Acceptable Use Agreement and other relevant documents and complete the user declaration attached to it. For all students, the school will ensure that the relevant 'IT Acceptable Use Agreement' document is issued and the consent form is completed by pupils and their parents. In addition, copies of the 'IT Acceptable Use Agreement' document and consent form will be issued to any visitors requiring the use of any school IT systems whilst on site.

10. Personal Use

10.1. The School has devoted time and effort into developing the IT Systems to assist staff with their work. It is, however, recognised that there are times when staff may want to use the systems for non-work-related purposes, and in recognising this need the School may permit staff to use the Systems for limited personal use.

10.2. Staff must not use the systems for personal use during working hours. Staff must not allow personal use of systems to interfere with your day to day duties. Any non-job-related use of the systems during working hours may be subject to disciplinary action.

10.3. Staff must not use School software for personal use unless the terms of the licence permit this and staff are responsible for checking the licensing position. Microsoft Office and Internet Explorer are licensed for personal use.

10.4. Use of the systems should at all times be strictly in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 9.1 above. Staff must pay all costs associated with personal use at the School's current rates e.g. cost of paper.

10.5. Staff are responsible for any non-business-related file which is stored on their computer.

11. Disciplinary Implications

11.1. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. They may also result in staff being prosecuted under the Computer Misuse Act 1990, and may lead to prosecution of the School and the individual(s) concerned and/or civil claims for damages.