



Internet Safety with STARZ ~ Information for parents

This section gives guidance on specific internet safety issues raised by the use of the Starz service. It should be read in conjunction with the county's general advice on internet safety and considered in the light of your school's own policy.

Government policies for the development of personalised learning, home-school links, access to information mean that there will be an increasing move to provide pupils with individual, password-protected access to internet services. The new Starz service has been developed in the expectation that schools will wish/need to move to individual access for pupils, but also offers an interim option for continuing to use class accounts.

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Internet Safety: Using Starz individual pupil accounts

There are no technical solutions that can guarantee 100% safe use of the internet and services on it. However, the following measures have been put in place to protect your child and minimise the risks of inappropriate use.

1. Account details

Pupil account usernames do not include the pupil's actual name. This means that the associated email address does not include the pupil's name and is thus less susceptible to being guessed by outside parties. Most schools have adopted a simple coding system for choosing pupil usernames.

2. Safemail

By default, all pupil accounts are included in the Safemail system. The effect of this is that, irrespective of whether a pupil is sending email from home, school or wherever, they can only use it to send messages to other people in their school. They can also only receive messages from others in the school. Attempts to send messages to external email addresses are blocked. External messages sent to pupils are never received. So, for instance, it is not possible for pupil accounts to receive spam messages.

It is possible to take individual or groups of accounts out of the Safemail system (temporarily or permanently). This is not recommended except in particular circumstances. The ICT Coordinator would be involved in any such decision or process.

Where classes wish to use email for a project that involves communication with external partners, it is suggested that individual pupil emails are sent in the first instance to a 'class' account in the school and that they are then forwarded on to their final destination. (Class accounts are not included in the Safemail system by default). All return messages would also be sent to the class account and, if necessary, forwarded on to the individual pupil. This has the advantage that all messages can be monitored in a single account.

3. Access to accounts

All pupil accounts are, by default, set to be private. This means that the contents of that account - email, portfolio etc - can only be viewed by someone logging in with the individual pupil's username/password. Therefore Pupil A cannot by default look at Pupil B's account.

4. Filtering

Built into the Starz accounts are anti-virus checking and a bad language filter. The latter can never be 100% reliable, so if you believe it is letting through words that should be filtered, please inform your school who will then forward this information to the appropriate helpline.

As far as possible, links from the Starz website are only made to other websites where we are reasonably confident that they will not result in children finding unsuitable material. However, the service does not prevent pupils from following further links to other sites. In school the county's internet filtering should block access to most unsuitable material. If you experience any failures in the system please notify your school as soon as possible.

5. Monitoring

Each subscribing school has access to a special email address to which copies of all emails generated by pupils are sent. This allows you to monitor all email transactions in a single place. It is recommended that each school has a policy for how often those emails are monitored.