

Rules for the use of IT Facilities

Last reviewed: 20/04/2022

Introduction

These rules set out the standards to be observed by members of staff, students and other persons or bodies when using Spirit Studios' IT facilities.

The purpose of these rules are to ensure that all use is of a good quality, and does not breach any relevant law or any of Spirit Studios' regulations. Spirit Studios wishes to encourage responsible use of its IT facilities for appropriate purposes, and wishes to prevent the use of its IT facilities for purposes that are unlawful, or cause annoyance or inconvenience to others.

No user should act in a way that might endanger the good name or reputation of Spirit Studios. All users must therefore ensure that any material placed on the IT Facilities or any use of the IT facilities does not risk criminal prosecution or civil legal action. Even if the material is legal or the use is legal, it still must not be such that it might endanger the good name or reputation of Spirit Studios or might bring the name of Spirit Studios into disrepute.

The use of the IT facilities by any user implies acceptance on the part of that user of these rules together with the IT Security Policy and the policies referred to within these documents as applicable.

Relationships with existing policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance applicable to the user:

- Data Protection Policy
- Email Use Policy
- IT Security Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Student Handbook
- Staff Handbook
- Wireless Network Security & Fair Usage Policy

Computer Usage

Access to IT facilities is restricted to authorised users only, and such authority is formally assigned on each IT system. On certain public facing systems, such as Spirit Studios' website, a person accessing these systems automatically becomes an authorised user for the purposes of the rules.

Responsibilities of all users of all IT facilities

All users must:

- Only use Spirit Studios' IT facilities in accordance with the IT Security Policy
- Only use Spirit Studios' IT facilities (including software) for permitted uses which are restricted to the educational and business purposes listed below.
- Not use Spirit Studios' IT facilities for any use which is prohibited or otherwise in breach of these rules

Permitted Uses

Permitted uses include:

- Teaching
- Research authorised by Spirit Studios
- Personal educational development and administration
- Management of Spirit Studios' organisation and business
- Development work associated with any of these is also permitted

Prohibited uses

Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to:

- Creating, accessing, transmitting or downloading inappropriate, terrorist related or extremist materials. Spirit Studios has a statutory duty to take steps to prevent individuals being drawn into extremism and terrorism and a duty to alert and report any attempted access to, or dissemination of, such inappropriate material. More information can be found in our Prevent Policy.
- Placing on the IT facilities or transmission of material which is by its nature or effect a commercial advertisement or other unsolicited transmission to a mass-mailing list (unsolicited bulk email or "spam"), other than a commercial advertisement on behalf of Spirit Studios
- Consultancy and commercial exploitation
- Use of the internet and email, use of chat rooms, etc. which does not relate to Spirit Studios' educational purposes
- The playing of recreational computer games
- Harassment of others by inappropriate use of the IT facilities
- Maliciously interfering with the IT facilities or any other computer system or network
- Attempting to gain or successfully gaining access to any computer system, network or account without the required permission or otherwise where it is not intended the user may have such access
- Probing the security of any computer system, network or account
- Viewing, modifying or otherwise tampering with any data or computer system without consent or where it is otherwise not intended the user should do so

Information handling and storage on IT facilities

Regulations on how all information must be accessed, handled and stored on Spirit Studios' IT facilities and how the information relating to Spirit Studios' organisation and business must be processed can be viewed in the IT Security Policy.

Users must not use the IT facilities for the creation, display, storage or transmission of any of the following material:

- Material which is offensive, obscene, extremist, or excessively violent, and in particular material which may lead to injury or damage to minors. (If such usage is required for properly supervised and lawful research purposes, the Head of Technology must give prior approval to such usage following an application.
- Material which discriminates or encourages discrimination on any prohibited grounds, namely disability, age, sex, race, gender, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity.
- Material which is in breach of the provisions of any legislation from time to time in force in the UK.
- Material which might contravene the law of defamation. Users must therefore ensure that facts communicated to others relating to individuals or organisations are accurate and verifiable. Any views or opinions expressed by users must not damage the reputation of those persons or individuals who are the subject to those views, and must accurately reflect only the honest and reasonably held opinion of the user.
- Users must not use Spirit Studios' IT facilities for the display, storage or transmission of material which the user either knew, or ought to have known, would breach confidentiality obligations to Spirit Studios or another person or organisation.

Passwords

All users of Spirit Studios' IT facilities must access information held on those facilities by the use of passwords as detailed in the IT Security Policy:

- The user's password should be known only to the user and the IT system. Spirit Studios will not issue any communications that will request you to supply your password
- The user must not communicate their passwords to a third party
- The user must not allow their disk space or any other IT facility to be used by a third party
- The user must immediately inform the technical department if they think that any other person has obtained unauthorised access to their account, system or disk space
- The user should change their password at regular intervals

World Wide Web

Users must identify themselves as being the authors of any material or information which they place on the web, or which an uploader places on the web on their behalf. Users acting as uploaders for all the authors in a school or service are not required to read or edit the files processed by them in this capacity and are not required to accept responsibility for the contents of files which they place on the web in their capacity as an uploader, such responsibility remains with the authors. Uploaders should however ensure that all material they place on the web contains the author's details.

Authors are responsible for the content, accuracy and currency of all information identified as written by them on the web and must ensure that any entries on the web are with the permission of the owner or as otherwise permitted by law or the terms of any copyright licenses.

So far as is reasonably practical, users should remove from the web any files under their control which contain out-of-date information. In any event, users must display the date when each page of information was last updated and ensure that each page of information conforms generally to Spirit Studios' design guidelines.

Data Protection and Copyright

Users shall not breach the privacy of any information held by Spirit Studios on its IT facilities or incite another to do so. Personal data (as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR legal framework) may only be held or processed on the IT facilities in accordance with the provisions and the uses permitted by Spirit Studios.

Users may only copy, modify, disseminate or use any part of any information or material belonging to another user, including another user's email address, with the permission of the owner or as otherwise permitted by law or the terms of the copyright licenses.

Email

Users are not permitted to send global emails, emails to mass mailing lists, including Spirit Studios' email address book without the special permission from the Head of Technology. Please see the Email Use Policy for further rules relating to emails.

Other rules governing the use of external email accounts and storage of corporate data are included in the IT Security Policy.

Any breach of the Email Use Policy may be subject to sanctions as set out below, under Breach of the Rules.

Hardware/Non-Standard Hardware and IT Facilities

All users of the IT facilities must adhere to the statements in the IT Security Policy.

- Users must not connect any equipment to the IT facilities without prior permission from the Head of Technology, or nominee.
- Users must not damage, disconnect or tamper with the computing equipment, its systems, programs, or other stored information.

Software/Non-Standard Software and IT Facilities

All users of the IT facilities must adhere to the statements in the IT Security Policy.

- Where a user's queries or requests for support have to be taken up with a supplier of hardware or software, this must be done through a single contact within the technical department.
- Software used on Spirit Studios' IT facilities must not be copied without express permission of the Head of Technology, and appropriate declarations signed by the user.

Breakages

Any breakages to IT facilities must be reported immediately to reception or via the [Technical Support Centre](#). There will be no reproach for breakages as long as it is not caused by a breach of the rules or negligence. If breakages do occur due to a breach of the rules or negligence, users are liable for the full repair or replacement costs.

Access to Data Hosted by External Suppliers

When external suppliers supply data access to Spirit Studios, then availability and use of that data by individuals of Spirit Studios is subject to the requirements of such agreements, contracts and licenses as may be applicable.

Breach of the Rules

Sanctions

In the event of any breach of these rules then Spirit Studios may apply one or more of the following sanctions:

- Withdrawal of the information concerned from Spirit Studios' IT facilities
- Temporary or permanent prevention of access to the relevant pages on the web
- The withdrawal of the user's right to use the IT facilities for a specified period.
- Liability for the cost of repair or replacement of any equipment broken through a breach of these rules or negligence.
- Spirit Studios' Student Conduct Regulations may be invoked. In a case of an apparent breach of the rules by a member of staff, his/her line manager will be informed. Further action may be taken in accordance with Spirit Studios' procedures set out in the Staff Handbook/Contract.
- Users should note that breaches of the provisions set out in these rules may also lead to criminal or civil prosecution.

Spirit Studios reserves the right to withdraw a student's right to access the IT facilities in the event that tuition fees are outstanding.

Procedure

If a breach is sufficiently serious, Spirit Studios reserves the right to refer straight to a particular stage in the procedure before a verbal warning has been given and/or without reference to the prior stages where this is reasonable and proportionate in light of the severity of the breach concerned.

Initial Action

Technical support staff will normally seek to resolve breaches of these rules in an informal manner. Where the breach is minor in nature, the user will initially be given a verbal warning. If the user continues to breach the rules notwithstanding the warning, and/or the severity of the breach so justifies, the user may be denied access to IT facilities for a period of up to 7 days.

Whenever students are denied access to the IT facilities for disciplinary reasons, the Vice Principal and the student's tutors will be informed.

If a breach of rules takes the form of or is accompanied by noisy, disruptive or violent behaviour, the user may be escorted from the premises. In such a case the matter may be referred for action under the Student Conduct Regulations or Staff Handbook/contract. Individuals who feel aggrieved by action taken against them may appeal to the Head of Technology, or nominee.

Further Action

If an alleged breach is sufficiently serious, or becomes so by repetition or because of an uncooperative response to warnings, further action may be as follows:

Students

A student will be called to see the Head of Technology, or nominee, and other members of senior management and/or the technical department may also be present. A friend may accompany the student to this meeting, and a member of academic staff may be present, if appropriate. Others may be asked to attend such meetings as witnesses.

If a breach of the rules is established, the student will be warned about future conduct and may be denied access to the IT facilities for up to 14 days. The student will also have his/her name recorded within the technical department for a period of 1 year from the date of the offence. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated to the Vice Principal and the students tutors. Any further breach of the rules which occurs during that year may result in the withdrawal of access to the IT facilities for up to 30 days or referral to the Vice Principal in accordance with the Student Conduct Regulations.

Any appeal arising from this procedure will be to the Head of Technology, or nominee.

Particularly serious cases, or repeated breaches of the rules, may be referred to the Vice Principal to be dealt with in accordance with Spirit Studios' Student Conduct Regulations, in which case access to the IT facilities may be withdrawn until the completion of disciplinary procedures.

External Users

External users will be seen by a senior member of the technical department who may provisionally remove their access rights to all of the IT facilities with immediate effect. This action may subsequently be confirmed and extended indefinitely by Spirit Studios. Any fees paid will be returned.

Staff

The relevant sanctions will be applied in accordance with the Staff Handbook/Contract.

Right of Appeal

Save for where users rights have been revoked with immediate effect, and/or the user has been escorted from Spirit Studios' premises as set out above, no sanction will be imposed until the user has been notified in writing (or email) of the alleged breach(es) of these rules and of the sanction that is being imposed.

If the student wishes to appeal a sanction that has been imposed as a result of breaching these rules, the student can request a meeting with the Head of Technology or nominee. A friend may accompany the student to this meeting, and a member of academic staff may be present, if appropriate.

If this meeting does not resolve the situation the student may appeal against a decision imposing one or more of the above sanctions. Any such appeal must be made in writing within 5 working days of receiving the written notification of the decision and the sanction(s) and must be accompanied by relevant evidence to support the appeal. The appeal will be considered by the Head of Technology or their nominee, who may seek clarification or ask questions of any member of staff and/or the user where appropriate.

The decision of the Head of Technology or their nominee shall be final.