



GLOW FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document has been produced by East Renfrewshire Council to help provide parents with an understanding of GLOW and assurances about how it is secured. It is supplementary to the Education Scotland Parent Guide to Glow which ERC issue to parents and is available on the national Glow website. This gives more high level details about the site and how it is, or can be, used.

If your question is not answered, please contact your child's Teacher and we will attempt to get the answers for you and respond. This questionnaire will also be updated with new questions and answers as and when they are raised and answered.

What is GLOW?

Glow is a national initiative to use networked facilities to enhance teaching and learning within the educational community across Scotland within a closed Intranet environment and should not be confused with the wider Internet. All 32 Scottish education authorities have access to Glow.

It is designed as a trusted and secure environment for pupils, teachers and parents to focus on facilities, information and resources important to education and has been in existence since around 2006.

For more information on GLOW go to www.ltscotland.org.uk/usingglowandict/

Does the school own GLOW?

The Scottish Government are the owners of GLOW, Education Scotland is the Contractual owners (and strategic decision makers for Security Standards and Site Content) and RM Education is the managed service providers and does the day to day management in line with Contractual obligations. Teachers, pupils and parents are only users of the facilities.

So what is the School role in GLOW?

We are users of the facilities provided or in other words, customers. We can set up user accounts and put content onto Glowgroups which we have permissions to create.

Does every school use Glow?

Yes, it is a national initiative and some use it far more comprehensively than we do. The national Curriculum for Excellence requires pupils to participate in profiling. The E-portfolio is part of this process. Education Scotland advise that nationally, there are 25,000 pupil e-portfolio's already created within Scotland.

What if I have a question about content or security?

It depends on the question. GLOW is managed nationally under the control of Education Scotland but schools have some control over local aspects of their own Glowgroups. As a general rule of thumb, anything related to the GLOW system itself, the GLOW website (including content presented on the front page) should be directed to Education Scotland.

Telephone: 0141 282 5000 Monday to Thursday from 8:30am to 5:00pm, and from 08:30 to 4:30pm on Fridays.

Textphone (for deaf users): 01506 600 236

Email: enquiries@educationscotland.gov.uk

If the content is about something a teacher, pupil or parent has put up onto the site or about their access then speak to your child's teacher or the school Head Teacher. They may not know all the answers themselves, but they have access to other staff that do.

Can you prove GLOW is secure?

Sort of, ERC has published the GLOW Security Policy on its school websites. This provides you with a high level summary of what they do to keep the site secure. They won't go into detail about the actual design of the security measures though as this in itself would be a security threat.

The Council's Information Security Officer has reviewed the security framework in more detail and is happy that security was embedded into GLOW at the design stage and continues to be treated seriously.

In line with government policy and general best practice, Education Scotland has the site tested regularly by CLAS qualified testers to obtain independent confirmation of the status of security controls.

What about privacy?

When the current GLOW site was created, it was before many of today's privacy standards were established. A newer more up to date GLOW site is under development and scheduled to be live come September 2012. The Scottish Government and Education Scotland are consulting with key stakeholders as part of the privacy and security design. Ultimately this should lead to a Privacy Impact Report which we will make available on school websites.

The hard coded rules based on Profiles are:

Teachers can see and be seen across the whole country

Pupils can only be seen from within the same School

Parents can view only teachers in their own School

Does GLOW share information?

Glow use a safe and secure technology to ensure that personal information is never shared, and users can only engage within a trusted federation of educational websites and services.

Why is it important for my child to use GLOW?

Children are able to learn about online privacy using GLOW in a safe and secure environment with Teachers able to check to make sure they are not giving out excessive or inappropriate details about themselves.

How is access controlled?

Your child is given access by their school via a unique login using a secure username and password. This gives the child access to information and resources suitable to them. ERC have a managed process for access to Glow which requires school authorisation and is not a simple unauthenticated 'sign up'.

Education Scotland set a predefined level of Permissions for each Profile that can be allocated. Each council has dedicated staff with Account and Services Management rights who can if they think reasonable, change the Profile Permissions. For Pupils the Default is set to Basic which means they can only search for other pupils and only of those within their own School.

ERC Education staff carry out an audit annually to review Permissions and Profiles and remove any that are no longer required.

Who is able to grant access rights to Glow?

At a national GLOW level, access for IT Support purposes is managed by Education Scotland. However, we can confirm that Education Scotland make it a pre-requisite that anyone given access, irrespective of who employs them, has Enhanced Disclosure Scotland checks carried out as well as UK Government Background Checks.

Pupil, Teacher and Parent access is managed by Schools and accounts are provisioned using information contained in Click and Go, the schools' record keeping system. Access is granted through a process managed by each School's Accounts and Services Manager. As part of the annual registration process, Pupil and Teacher GLOW accounts are automatically set up, amended or deleted with ad-hoc changes made as necessary throughout the year.

The national Glow environment has been designed so that only school staff members can create Glow groups (a closed learning environment for a group of agreed users) and those same staff members set permissions for local users (staff, pupils and eventually parents) who can access these areas and what they will be able to do there. Some users will have the ability to read only, others to contribute via discussion or post documentation. Each Glow group has a Content Filter Policy in place.

How is access managed for IT Support Staff?

RM Education are contracted to provide a managed service for Education Scotland. They have full administrator access rights as this is a necessary part of support provision. Education Scotland would be able to advise how use of these permissions are audited or if RM's own Information Security Policies make it clear that misuse of heightened permissions is a disciplinary offence and the process for removing redundant accounts. It is fairly typical for such clauses to exist however and for it to be extended to any additional outsourcing activity.

Administration staff can only access GLOW from a restricted range of PCs. This is designed to prevent them from attempting to logon from inappropriate locations or insecure computers eg., Home PCs.

Does everyone see the same content?

No. A pupil's access to, and view of, Glow will be different from a teacher's or a parent's.

Does anyone monitor GLOW

All IT activity is filtered and monitored. Routine monitoring is carried out by nominated staff who receive training in what to look for and when to raise concerns. Access to monitoring tools is deliberately kept to the minimum necessary.

The ERC Information Security Officer provides the framework to be followed by staff. This allows an escalation path where an event is found to breach acceptable use policy and a source of impartial advice on findings or suspicions. Skills transfers are done so that

nominated staff can understand what information they are looking for, when and how to raise concerns and what they should and should not do with the monitoring privileges they are given.

Teachers carry out monitoring of their class GLOW groups and pupil use.

Does Glowmail identify the school or pupils?

While Glow email addresses may include the full name of the user, the school is not identified and the format of the address is @glow.e-renfrew.sch.uk.

How is use of Glowmail managed and monitored

Parents and pupils sign an annual user agreement which gives details of what is and is not acceptable use and what to do if contacted by a stranger. The user agreement clearly lays down an expectation that pupils would speak to the teacher if they received an email from someone they didn't know.

What if I do not want my child to have a Glowmail account?

Email is available on Glow for all pupils from P4 onwards. Pupils in schools across East Renfrewshire and indeed Scotland have access to their Glow email, some using it to submit homework to their teacher. We would encourage the use of email, which is a skill for life. Glow email is contained within a safe and trusted environment and while it lacks sophisticated features normally available for older pupils and staff, it is more appropriate for younger children to use for communication than other forms of email because of this.

Can I have access to my child's Glow account?

The Scottish Government intend that Glow is made available to parents of school age children. Authorities across Scotland are at differing stages of the roll-out of Glow to parents. East Renfrewshire is exploring how this should best be done via a pilot project currently taking place with Woodfarm High's Parent Council, starting with limited access. Legal Services have been involved to clarify the requirements of the Data Protection Act and any other relevant legislation and draw up the associated Parental User Agreements. There is no reason why parents cannot oversee their child's activity in Glow in any way different to other Internet use.

Will the school provide parents with any training on GLOW?

Some schools hold annual Information Evenings on internet safety in general covering use of PC's mobile phones, internet, email and Glow so speak to your child's teacher or the schools head teacher to find out if they are planning one.