



National Centre for Technology in Education  
Ionad Náisiúnta don Teicneolaíocht san Oideachas

March 2010

## **Changes to Content Filtering Levels for Schools**

Dear Principal,

We'd like to update you regarding some changes that are being introduced to the Schools Broadband Content Filtering service. Over the last few years since Schools Broadband was introduced and an increasing number of schools have requested access to 'web 2.0' type websites, which allow users to upload their own online content etc. Feedback from schools have indicated that while content filtering is currently providing a valuable service to schools a growing number would like to have access to websites which are currently blocked. For example, the most common request schools make to NCTE is to have [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) allowed so that schools can access its' educational video content.

**The Schools Broadband service currently has 2 levels of filtering**, namely **level B**, which is restricted to educational and reference websites while the other, **level A**, is used by over 98% of schools and allows access to a 'wider' selection of websites.

**4 New content filtering levels are being added to provide more flexibility to schools as follows:**

- Firstly the existing 2 levels (level A & level B) will remain unchanged, so schools that are happy to remain with their current level will not experience a change.
- The existing level B will be renamed level 1, while the existing level A will be renamed level 3.
- An additional 4 levels will be introduced to provide a total of 6 content filtering levels and these levels are described on Table 1, and in more detail in the attached excel spreadsheet file.
- Schools that want to change from their existing content filtering level to a new level need to first consider the implications that this change will have in the school. If for example a school were to change from their existing level A to the new level 4 to allow 'youtube' it would need to consider if this type of change is consistent with its' school Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP).
- Schools will need to confirm that their AUP in use in the school complies with the NCTE guidelines on School Internet AUP, specifically with reference to supervision of online access. These guidelines can be accessed at [www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety](http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety)
- In order to change content filtering level, schools will need to complete and return the attached Form CCF.

**Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP):**

Regarding the AUP it is the responsibility of each school to have an up to date written Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in use in the school. The school Internet AUP should state that Internet and online use by pupils will be under the supervision of school staff. School Authorities should inform staff and students that Internet and email use will be monitored and that inappropriate use of the service may result in sanction by the school.

**Content Filtering Levels:**

All 6 content filtering levels are designed to block content of an illegal or pornographic content. Details of the content filtering policy and the filtering levels that are available to schools are attached.

If you have decided to change the Content Filtering level for your school we ask you to confirm this to the NCTE Service Desk by completing and returning the accompanying CCF form.

If you have queries or require further information please call the **NCTE Broadband Service Desk at 1800 33 44 66** where our broadband support team will be delighted to assist you.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

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NCTE Service Desk  
1800 33 44 66  
[servicedesk@ncte.ie](mailto:servicedesk@ncte.ie)

## Change Content Filtering Level Form (CCF form)

To request a change to content filtering level for your school please tick the new level required.  
For more detailed information on the Content Filtering levels see attached excel spreadsheet file.

School Roll Number	
School Name :	
<b>Content Filtering Levels</b>	<i>Tick one box to indicate the filtering level required.</i>
<b>Level 1: (This level is the same as the existing Level B)</b> This is the <b>most restricted</b> level and only allows access to 'Scoilnet' and other educational websites, and is used by a small number of schools	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<b>Level 2:</b> This new level allows access to the same websites as 'level A' but with the <b>'Games' category blocked.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<b>Level 3: This level is the same as the existing Level A, and is currently used by the vast majority of schools.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<b>Level 4:</b> This new level allows access to the same websites as level 3 but allows access to 'youtube', 'personal storage category' and other similar types of sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<b>Level 5:</b> This new level allows access to the same websites as level 4 but allows access to 'personal websites category', and other similar types of sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
<b>Level 6:</b> This new level allows access to the same websites as level 5 but allows access to 'personal relationships category' and other similar types of sites.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

**Table 1: Level 1 is the most restricted level while level 6 allows the widest level of access. All 6 content filtering levels are designed to block content of an illegal or pornographic content.**

### As Principal I confirm the following on behalf of the school:

1. The school wishes to request a change to content filtering as per Table 1 (above).
2. The school has an appropriate AUP in use regarding content filtering level
3. School Authorities will inform staff and students that Internet and email use will be monitored and that inappropriate use of the service may result in sanction by the school.
4. The school accepts that it has obligations in relation to the provision of the service, in terms of non-abuse of the service, and confirms that it has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in operation in the school and that it complies with the NCTE guidelines on School Internet AUP, at [www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety](http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety) and specifically with reference to supervision of online access.
5. The School understands and accepts the risks associated with using schools broadband at all levels of filtering and accepts that there are increased levels of risk associated with levels 4 to level 6.
6. The School understands and accepts that where a school is engaging in inappropriate online behaviour the Broadband Schools team reserve the right to take whatever actions are required to protect the network and other schools. This may require disconnecting the 'offending school' until the situation is resolved satisfactorily.
7. If a user accesses material which is considered inappropriate for schools, this should be reported to an appropriate staff member or school Principal, as per schools AUP, who are then recommended to report the matter to the NCTE Service Desk.

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Principal's Name (in capitals): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your co-operation, please return this signed form to:  
**AUP/CF forms, NCTE Service Desk, P.O. Box 10101, Dublin 17.**  
Or completed forms may be faxed to **01- 8473370**