

Task 1

Use of Information P5

Southern Regional College has decided it is time to update the staff handbook as it is aware that an increasing number of employees are handling data on a day-to-day basis. You have been asked to help by producing three sections of the handbook, either for the published handbook or the business intranet, on issues related to the *use of information*.

a) Section 1 should explain the following topics including how the organisation administers these issues:

- Legal issues in relation to the use of information.
- Ethical issues in relation to the use of information. (P5)

Introduction

This task will investigate the importance of SRC to uphold legal obligations and how they are relevant to the colleges operations. Three legal issues will be looked at which include

- Data Protection Act
- Computer Misuse Act
- Freedom of Information Act

These legal issues protect both the SRC from legal actions and the students from harm. If these acts are ignored, it could leave people at risk or in danger of doing something illegal. It is important that these acts are followed and adhered to which will ensure the protection of everyone within the SRC.

Legal Issues

There are three legal issues which SRC must follow and not breach in any way. Following these legal issues ensure the people who make up the college are safe at all times. Below will look at each act in more detail.

Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act controls how people's information is used and dealt with. Those responsible for using data must follow a strict protocol. For example, those who make up SRC. They must ensure that the information is;

- used fairly and lawfully
- used for limited, specifically stated purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive

- The facilities are to be used as part of the normal execution of a learner's education, a lecturer's instruction or an employee's job responsibilities.
- Users should be aware that all data on the network will be monitored. This includes e-mail messages and any data on media connected to College facilities. College supplied e-mail addresses are not private. Neither should a user assume that the information systems are secure.
- All web content must be sanctioned by the appropriate authority before being published. Recipients of transmitted information should be informed that opinions expressed by individuals are not necessarily those of the College.

NETWORK ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY SUMMARY

SUMMARY POLICY STATEMENT

The Network Acceptable Use Policy is designed to outline for staff, learners and other authorised users the conditions of use for these resources so that all users can benefit from the facilities.

General Principles

- All staff and learners of Southern Regional College are permitted and encouraged to use the College's ICT facilities, including the public Internet, provided that the conditions of use are adhered to.
- The Internet and Intranet are to be used in a manner that is consistent with the College's standards.
- The facilities are to be used as part of the normal execution of a learner's education, a lecturer's instruction or an employee's job responsibilities.
- Users should be aware that all data on the network will be monitored. This includes e-mail messages and any data on media connected to College facilities. College supplied e-mail addresses are not private. Neither should a user assume that the information systems are secure.
- All web content must be sanctioned by the appropriate authority before being published. Recipients of transmitted information should be informed that opinions expressed by individuals are not necessarily those of the College.

Unacceptable Practices

The following practices are unacceptable and may be subject to disciplinary action, including revocation of access privileges, written warnings, termination of employment and in some cases, reporting to the police.

- The creation or transmission (e.g. by visiting an Internet site) of an offence, obscene or indecent images, data or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material.
- The creation or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or copyrighted material in violation of copyright.
- Representing personal opinions as those of the College.
- Using the College's resources (including Internet and e-mail) for profit or private gain.
- Downloading any software or electronic files without implementing virus protection measures that have been approved and/or prescribed by the College.
- Hacking in any form. Intentionally interfering with normal operation of the network, including propagation of viruses, by-passing filtering systems, or sustained high volume network traffic.
- Examining, changing or using another person's files, output or username without explicit permission.
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information, which includes, but is not limited to: College databases, personal user information, access codes, computer software.

Through their own policy, SRC comply with the Computer Misuse Act which ensures that the act is being followed in every aspect of the college. At the start of every academic year and indeed every student enrolled in the college is given the policy which they sign to confirm that they will correspond with the policy. The SRC has strict rules which ensure that the policy is followed. Certain websites are blocked which prevents students breaching the act and indeed the colleges policy. The college work hard to ensure students are safe and this includes computer restriction such as preventing the downloading of new software. As a result of SRC having their own ICT Use policy, it ensures that they are complying with the Computer Misuse Act successfully.

computer. An advantage of this policy being in place is that it gives a clear direction as to the correct way to use the computer in SRC and this subsequently results in a more safe environment for all. It makes people feel safe within the college as they know that the system is well protected and that if anyone was misusing their computer, it would be detected by the college.

A potential disadvantage of this act for the college would be that it costs money to keep protection on computers. For example, having to install software that will detect any misuse of computers. It is also time consuming for members of the college to have to keep everyone safe online and deal with people who are using the computer incorrectly. However, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages as this policy means that there is a strict protocol within the college and everyone knows how to behave when using the internet or related programs.

Freedom of Information Act 2000; This legal act is important within SRC as it protects the information SRC keep on students, staff and other private information.

This act is followed strictly in SRC. The purpose of this act is to ensure that people's information is protected at all times and can only be viewed by people who have authorisation. The main advantage of having this act in place is that it ensures a safer environment for all. It keeps all information protected from external viewers so adds to the security of information within the college. It's important that people feel secure giving their information to SRC and this act reinforces the importance of the correct handling of information in SRC. A disadvantage of this act in place in SRC is that because it concerns holding information secure, this can cost SRC money to keep it stored and secure as this will involve expensive systems and back up to make sure all the information is safe.

Ethical Issues

Businesses have the responsibility to develop codes of conducts and policies which ensure that all staff abide by the rules, while keeping moral principles as one of the main focuses. Below will look at the advantages and disadvantages of SRC having ethical issues as well as their purpose and how their factors are related.

SRC must ensure that they have written policies in place to meet all ethical issues and that policies are enforced. For example, if students wear football tops then staff should recognise this and ask them to remove the clothing which may cause offence to other students. It is also important that the SRC public image is one where no one is discriminated against and that everyone regardless of their race, religion, gender and sexuality are not discriminated against. It is for this reason that equality is a top priority in SRC and the staff enforce this both in the college daily life as well as Admissions where everyone has an equal chance of being accepted onto a course.

An advantage of SRC having ethical issues in place would be that it promotes strong team work and productivity. Having regulations which outline the ways in which the college should operate make the work within the college occur at a higher standard. Ethical issues