

## **Policy on Acceptable Use of the Internet**

### **Introduction**

The internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It provides information and allows people to communicate with others and share information. It can develop children's independent research skills and promote life-long learning. However, in its largely unregulated state, the internet can present a number of risks for children. The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce those risks.

This version of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) was drawn up on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 at a staff meeting and endorsed by the Board of Management.

### **Aim**

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources in a safe and effective manner.

*Parental permission is required for access to the internet including publication of pupils' work on the school website*

*See Appendix 1*

### **School Strategies**

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Access to internet will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. The school internet is protected by the firewall provided by the NCTE (National Centre for Technology in Education).
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal USB memory sticks or CD-ROMs in school is allowed only under teacher supervision.
- Pupils will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

Staff will ensure to the maximum extent possible, that pupils know and understand that no internet user is permitted to:

- Use the internet for any illegal activity including accessing other computers.
- Retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Use obscene or offensive language.

- Cause damage to computers, computer systems or networks.
- Violate copyright laws.
- Disclose or publicise their own or another person's personal information.
- Use another user's password.
- Trespass in another user's folders, work or files.
- Cause any form of vandalism to the machine or the work of others including the uploading or creation of viruses.

### **Organisation and Management of Internet Use**

Teachers will select sites which will support pupils' learning. Pupils may be given details of suitable sites to extend their learning at home as and when appropriate.

### **Promoting Safe and Independent Use of the Internet**

Teachers will ensure that pupils understand appropriate use of the internet and are aware of the rules. Pupils will be encouraged to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### **Children's Use of Email, Messaging and Social Networks**

- Children in school must only use email for educational purposes and e-mails will be checked before being sent.
- Pupils will not be allowed to send personal emails from the school system. In-coming email will be regarded as public and may be examined by any staff member.
- The use of chat rooms, messaging services or social networking sites is forbidden.

*See Appendix 2 Advice for Parents*

### **School Website**

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages.
- No photographs, audio or video clips of individual pupils will be published on the public gallery of the school website. Instead photographs, audio or video clips will focus on group activities and children's work. .
- Personal pupil information including surnames, home address and contact details will not be used on school web pages.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

### **Inappropriate Usage**

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school's AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

Such sanctions may include but are not limited to

- Written warning
- Temporary withdrawal of access privileges
- In extreme cases, suspension or exclusion

The school will be obliged to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

### **Staff Use of Email and the Internet**

Members of staff are encouraged to use various online resources in their teaching and learning activities, to conduct research, and for contact with others. Each member of staff has access to a school email address as part of his/her work, protected by the use of a confidential password, which is kept secure.

- The use of email for personal use is unacceptable during teaching hours.
- When using the internet, all users must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity laws.
- School printers may only be used to print downloaded materials associated with school activities.
- All users are expected to communicate in a professional manner.
- It will not be usual practice to read staff emails but the school reserves the right to do this in the case of a suspected breach of these policy guidelines.
- A serious breach may be treated as a disciplinary matter.
- No person will in any way alter the filtering preferences.

### **Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on\_\_\_\_\_.

It replaces the existing policy and is implemented forthwith.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

**Review:** June 2017

### **Communication.**

This policy is available on the school's website. It is also available on request from the Principal / Secretary.

## APPENDIX 1

Dear Parents,

As part of the school's provision of eLearning experiences, the children will have supervised access to the internet. As you are probably aware, the Internet contains a vast amount of information but unfortunately not all of this is suitable for children and so we have produced an Acceptable Use Policy specifying our guidelines.

Before being allowed to use the Internet, all pupils must obtain parental permission. We therefore ask that both you and your child sign the detachable slip below as evidence of your approval and acceptance of the school rules on this matter. A copy of our Acceptable Use Policy is on the school's website and hard copies are available from the school office.

Please read the Acceptable Use Policy carefully.

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### PERMISSION SLIP

**I give for permission for my child to have access to the internet in school and accept school rules on this matter.**

**Name of Pupil** .....

**Class** .....

**Signature of Parent** .....

**Signature of Pupil** .....

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Advice for Parents on ICT in the Home**

During school hours, teachers will guide pupils toward appropriate materials on the internet. Outside school, parents or guardians should bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they normally would with other information sources, such as television, magazines etc.

Parents or guardians should be aware that the internet service provider at home may not be filtered.

It is therefore important that these guidelines are followed:

- Discuss rules for using the internet with your children and decide together when, how long and what comprises appropriate use.
- Be aware of the sites your children are visiting and discuss with them what they are learning.
- Ensure that children do not give out personal identifying information on the internet such as a picture, full name, home address, email address, phone number, school name or financial information such as credit card or bank details.
- Encourage your children not to respond to any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages and to inform you if they receive any such messages or images.
- Reinforce with your child that if they do not know someone personally they should not be communicating with them online.
- Ensure privacy settings for all messaging and social networking services are adequately set to prevent disclosure of detailed personal and/or location information.
- Appropriate home use of internet can be educationally beneficial and can make a useful contribution to home and school work. It should however be supervised and parents be aware that they are responsible for their children's use of the internet resources at home.