



DIGITAL LEARNING ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

A Mary Ward school today develops responsive and effective ways to enable the young to engage safely and ethically with social media and emerging technology. This ensures the integrity of relationships while enhancing the opportunity for learning and creating global digital citizens.

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to agreed sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP at least annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

This version of the AUP was created/updated on 24/04/23 and ratified on 12/06/2024.

School's Strategy

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

General

- Students and teachers should be provided with training in the area of Internet safety
- 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 external digital storage media in school, requires a teacher's permission
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
- The school will regularly monitor students' internet usage.

Internet Use

- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials
- Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement)
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords..
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy
- Students will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.

Email

- Students will use approved school email accounts.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students will not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or "reply all" without the permission of the originator.
- Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school based work.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.
- Students should report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication. Students should report any such communications to a teacher.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. Students should report any suspicious emails to a teacher.
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school Internet Use.

Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

- All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of the school community on social media.
- Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff and students must not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social media service or message services.
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

Guidance for Teachers

Guidance for Registered Teachers about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication.

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-Teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

- The school's digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school.
- This platform should enable two-way communication
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform
- Use of email accounts (as noted above)
- Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform
- The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR)
- Each user of the platform should have their own unique login credentials. Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.
- Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.

Remote Learning Policy

- All members of the school community should understand that standard school policies are still applicable (e.g. Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Mobile Phone Policy)
- Students must only use their allocated username and password to log on to the school network and to the school domain *Google Workspace for Education*.
- Students must not send, receive or publish any material that is obscene, illegal, defamatory or that is intended to demean, disrespect or intimidate another person or undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Students must not download any files, images or videos not relevant to their studies.
- Students must not photograph or make any recording (video or audio) of a teacher or of another student without their consent. This would constitute a serious breach of the school's *Code of Behaviour* and could lead to immediate suspension as per the Code of Behaviour. This prohibition extends to the use of any screen/audio capture technology during learning facilitated through online streaming.
- Students must not reveal their own or other person's personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students must observe good "netiquette" (i.e. etiquette on the internet) at all times.
- Students should only publish work that is their own creation and does not infringe copyright laws.
- Communication via *Google Workspace for Education* should be limited to the hours between 9:00 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Advice for Parents

- You should ensure that your daughter is checking her Google workspace account regularly for assigned work.
- Where live classes are being run you should ensure your daughter is in an area of the house that is quiet and free from distractions. Please be mindful that for Child Protection reasons, it may not be appropriate to use bedrooms for live classes.
- Live online classes should be viewed by your daughter only. (Not permitted to record)
- It is not appropriate for a parent to communicate with a teacher during a live online class.

Live Online Classes Etiquette for Students

- Codes for online classes must not be shared with anyone outside of the classroom/school
- Students must always follow the direction of their teacher just as in the classroom and come prepared for class.
- Students should turn on their camera or microphone when instructed to do so by the teacher.
- All microphones should be muted when a person is not speaking to avoid background noise interference.
- Cameras must be switched on to allow the teacher to see the student participating.

- Recordings or screenshots of online lessons by students are strictly forbidden, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour, as is any activity which results in unpermitted capture of personal data. The latter is also likely to be unlawful.

Images & Video

- Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are not identifiable (no names mentioned etc)
- Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
- Students and staff must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.
- Students and staff must not take or share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.
- Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is an unacceptable, illegal and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction and will be reported to the appropriate authorities

Communications

A wide range of rapidly developing communications technologies has the potential to enhance learning.

The following table details what digital technologies are permitted, when and by whom:

Communications Technologies	Allowed	Allowed at certain Times	Allowed with Teacher's permission	Not Allowed
Personal devices may be brought to school	✓			
Use of personal devices in lessons			✓	
Use of personal devices in social time				✓
Taking photos on personal devices (smartphone, tablet, etc.)			✓	
Use of hand-held devices			✓	
Use of personal email addresses in school, or on school network				✓
Use of school email for personal emails				✓
Use of chat rooms				✓
Use of instant messaging				✓
Use of social media sites and online forums			✓	
Use of blogs			✓	

Inappropriate Activities

Users should not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer Misuse and fraud legislation
- Racist material
- Pornography
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute
- Using school systems to run a private business
- Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (eg financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

School Website

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of students or staff
- Website using facilities such as comments and user-generated content will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages
- The school website will avoid publishing the first name and last name of individuals in a photograph
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published

Cyberbullying

Bullying is 'unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) which is repeated over time'.

(Anti-Bullying Procedures, Department of Education, 2013)

This definition also includes:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person with the intent to hurt, humiliate or intimidate them. Cyberbullying can take many forms including exclusion online, hurtful messages/images, abusive messages/emails, imitating someone online, etc. This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving.

Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedure, 2013 defines cyberbullying as “placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour”

As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc. messages/images, abusive messages/emails, imitating someone online, etc. This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students' home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools; a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times. Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another student or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken to ensure that staff and students are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyberbullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.

Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school should follow the rules set out in this agreement. They will only use personal devices (smartphone, tablet, smartwatch etc.) in school under the direction and/or supervision of a teacher if they have permission.

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet and digital technologies which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- **Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**
- **Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000**
- **Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017**
- **Children First Act 2015**
- **Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)**
- **Criminal Damage Act 1991**

Support Structures

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies will result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána. These sanctions are laid out in the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Permission Form

Please review the attached school Acceptable Use Policy, and sign and return this permission form to the Principal/Year Head/Class Tutor.

School Name: _____

Name of Student: _____

Class/Year: _____

Student

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet and digital technologies. I will use the internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the procedures outlined in the policy.

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if students access unsuitable websites.

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's school work may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing students' work on the school website.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Letter to Parent /Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Safe and Responsible Use of the Internet

As part of the school's education programme we offer students supervised access to the Internet. This allows students access to a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance the learning experience.

However, access to and use of the Internet and digital technologies requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy (enclosed). It is important that this enclosed document is read carefully, signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school.

Although the school takes active steps to promote safe use of the Internet, it recognises the possibility that students may accidentally or deliberately access inappropriate or objectionable material.

Having read the terms of our school's Acceptable Use Policy, you may like to take a moment to consider how the Internet is used in your own home, and see if there is any way you could make it safer for your own family.

Parents/Guardians can find a range of advice, support, tools and resources on the Webwise Parents Hub available on webwise.ie/parents. On the hub you'll find explainer guides to popular apps, talking points, how to guides, expert advice videos and a free Parents' Guide to a Better Internet.

Yours sincerely,