



### **Introduction:**

St. Mary's National School recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our students enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life. To that end, we provide access to ICT for student use. This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our students are expected to follow when using school technologies for school activities of any nature

### **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. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the Code of Behaviour– will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. Before enrolling, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the AUP unless the school is specifically notified.

### **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**

Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher. The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage. Students and teachers will 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 memory sticks or other 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.

The School's search engine has a built-in 'safe search' feature. The 'safe search' feature will be enabled on all search engines on school devices.

It is important that parents/guardians and pupils are aware of our Anti Bullying Policy in relation to social media;

- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.
- However, in the context of this policy, placing 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

#### **Use of Internet.**

Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials. Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures. Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.

Services such as G Suite for Education and its associated applications, Class Dojo, Seesaw, and Twitter and other social media are being used by the school to communicate with parents and also for parents to communicate with the school. These services, although not owned by St. Mary's National School, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy. Students will not examine, change or use another person's files, username or passwords. A firewall is used on school Devices to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate

material and to block unsuitable sites. This is regularly updated.

### **School Website**

Please note that the following points apply to the school's website and social media profiles, including but not limited to Twitter, Instagram, Google Workspace for Education, Class Dojo and Seesaw.

- Students will be given the opportunity to have photos, projects, artwork and other work relating to curricular and extra-curricular school activities published on the school website as per the consent form.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages.
- The school will use digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on school activities. Photographs, audio and video clips will be used.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will only publish the first name of any individuals in a photograph when in a group.
- Photos/Videos may be used for the production of the Homework Journal or specific school events e.g. Communion etc. These photos/videos and the photos/videos on our website/App should not be copied or posted to any social media or other website or published in any way.

### **Photographs**

St. Mary's National School uses Twitter and Instagram to celebrate the success stories and great achievements of our students. We use photographs/video/other multimedia to compliment text content on Twitter and/ or Instagram. Parents/guardians are required to give permission to the school for photographs of their children for social media. Examples, but not limited to, include the school website, twitter, instagram, seesaw and class dojo.

We advise the following:

- Photographs of the children will only be displayed online through our various platforms with explicit consent from parents/guardians through an Aladdin consent form ticked at the start of the year.
- Children will not be named in full – first name will suffice.
- No child shall be photographed and named under that photograph specifically if they are the only student photographed.
- It is the responsibility of parents/ guardians to ensure that their children are aware that they have not given permission for photographs of their children to be taken for social media. If this is the case, the child in question should stand out of these photographs.

### **Collaboration through other platforms .**

St. Mary's National School recognises that online collaboration is essential to education and may provide students with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among students. Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful and courteous conduct online as offline. This is of particular relevance to our school twitter account, google classroom and seesaw.

### **Twitter.**

St. Mary's National School Twitter Account (@stmarystown)

*The purpose of having a school Twitter account is to provide:*

- Communication with parents regarding specific events & activities
- Communication with new or prospective parents
- Communication with wider audience regarding positive advertisement of school and promotion of school
- Communication with wider audience of school life via possible communication-tours, photos of pupil's projects, notice boards, etc.
- Communication between parents especially new parents
- Continued advancement of our school communication system with information shared via paper notes, email, website & now Twitter
- Communication with families during times of unforeseen school closures to sustain the school community experience.

*Those using our social networking site must abide by the following:*

- Users cannot advertise products or services on our school Twitter account.

- Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed as offensive – inappropriate or harmful comments/content will be removed immediately
- Users should not add comments that can identify children
- To use Twitter, one must be 13 years of age or older. Therefore current pupils cannot be accepted as users. The sanction for breaking these rules is automatic removal from our Twitter page.

### **Instagram.**

The school utilises Instagram as a platform for various communication purposes to enhance engagement with parents, prospective parents, and the wider community. The following outlines the intended purposes of our school's Instagram account:

1. Communication with Parents: Our Instagram account serves as a tool for communicating with parents regarding specific events, activities, and updates related to school life.
2. Engagement with Prospective Parents: Prospective parents can gain insight into our school community and culture through our Instagram account. We share positive content that showcases the school's values, facilities, and academic achievements to attract and inform potential new families.
3. Positive Advertisement and Promotion: Our Instagram account is used to promote the positive aspects of our school and celebrate the accomplishments of our students. This includes sharing photos of student projects, achievements, extracurricular activities, and school events to foster a sense of pride and engagement within the school community.

Users of our school's Instagram account must adhere to the following guidelines:

- No Advertising: Users are prohibited from advertising products or services on our school's Instagram account.
- Respectful Conduct: Offensive, inappropriate, or harmful comments or content will be promptly removed from the account.
- Protection of Privacy: To protect the privacy and safety of our students, individual photographs will not include the names of students. In group photographs, only the first names of students may be used.
- Age Requirement: To comply with Instagram's terms of service, users must be 13 years of age or older. Therefore, current pupils are not permitted to access or use the school's Instagram account.
- Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in automatic removal from our Instagram account.

### **Use of the School's Digital Devices at home.**

St. Mary's National School may provide students with mobile computers, iPads or other digital devices to promote learning outside of the school. Students should abide by the same acceptable use policies, when using school devices off the school network, as on the school network, including when connected to a home network. Students are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to their teacher staff immediately. Use of school-issued mobile devices will be monitored.

### **Personal mobile devices.**

Students may not use personally-owned devices in school (e.g. laptops, tablets computers, digital-cameras, and smart-phones) for educational purposes, unless explicitly stated in notes read and signed by parents/guardians and written by their classroom teacher. Appropriate online behaviour and adherence to the Acceptable use policy should always be used..

### **Netiquette**

Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behaviour over computer networks and in particular in the online environment. To this end:

- Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Students should also recognise that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.
- Students should not post anything online that is inappropriate or contrary to the schools Code of Behaviour, Children will be made aware that they should not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see. More detailed examples of expected use and unacceptable use are given in Appendix One

### **Cyber-bullying**

Harassing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will not be tolerated in St. Mary's National School.

*We advise the following:*

- Our students must not send messages or post comments or photos with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges
- The school will support students, teachers and parents in dealing with cyberbullying St. Mary's National School is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0065/2011) and will act as required by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Health Service Executive.

Measures are taken by St. Mary's N.S 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. In addition the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures, 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".

Teachers will complete lessons that deal with the implications of cyber-bullying and the role that bystanders play in such situations. These lessons will be scaffolded through the classes ensuring that the issue of cyber bullying is revisited throughout the children's time in St. Mary's National School.

### **Plagiarism**

Students should not plagiarise content (copy or use as your own without citing the original creator), including words or images, from the Internet for inclusion on our school blog.

- Students should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online
- The school will encourage students who create original content to claim ownership of it.

### **Legislation**

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet 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 may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.

Sanctions can include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chairperson Board of Management

## Examples of Acceptable Use

I will:

Use school equipment for school--related activities only

- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert teachers if there is any problem with their use
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use blog or represent the school online.
- Alert a teacher if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, postings) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for learning reasons
- Recognise that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgement when using school technologies.