

## Scoil Cholmcille Greencastle

### Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

#### Introduction

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) 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 at school 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the AUP, will be imposed. This version of the AUP was updated in November 2024 following collaboration between Teachers, Parents, BOM and the National Council for Technology in Education (NCTE). The AUP will be reviewed on a regular basis by school and parent representatives. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully, to indicate that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

#### ICT and Internet access in school

Information and communication technology (ICT) has brought profound changes to almost all aspects of our lives in recent years. It has transformed activities as basic as how we work, communicate with each other, treat illnesses, travel, shop and enjoy our leisure time. It has also impacted hugely on education and schools. ICT and internet access have opened up a whole new world of teaching and learning in schools. While they should never replace teacher/student contact, online and digital learning platforms can provide an extra dimension to how schools operate. This is particularly important during times when schools may need to close unexpectedly for indefinite periods of time.

The internet is an essential element for education, business and social interaction. Internet use is part of the curriculum and a necessary tool for education. Providing access to the Internet in school will raise educational standards and support the professional work of staff. Teachers and pupils will have access to web sites worldwide, for example, museums, art galleries offering educational resources, news and current events. There will be opportunities for discussion with experts in many fields and to communicate and exchange information with students and others worldwide.

In addition, staff will have the opportunity to access educational materials and good curriculum practice, to communicate with the advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues; exchange curriculum and administration data with other schools and educational centres. The internet may also be used to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems.

This Acceptable Use Policy will address all rights, privileges, responsibilities and sanctions associated with access to and use of the internet in Scoil Cholmcille National School.

#### School Strategies

This policy has been drawn up in order to protect the children from the risks associated with the internet while they are at school or engaging in online distance learning. Parents and Guardians are advised however that while the children may be given internet-based homework assignments from time to time, the school take no responsibility for the internet usage of the students while they are outside school. It is important that all parents and guardians monitor their own child's internet usage at home and ensure that their children are aware and respectful of the risks involved.

Due to the international scale and linked nature of information available via the Internet, it is not possible to guarantee that particular types of material will never appear on a computer screen.

Neither the school nor Board of Management can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof. 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**

- All staff and any other adults involved in supervising children accessing the Internet, will be provided with this Acceptable Use Policy, and will have its importance explained to them.
- Parents' attention will be drawn to the Acceptable Use Policy on enrolment of their child in the school. The policy will be published on our school website.
- Access to internet will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Broadband will be installed by the Dept. of Education & Science and a centrally managed service will be provided to all schools through the NCTE which will include filtering, website blocking, web content blocking, antivirus and anti-spam controls.
- Up-loading and down-loading of non-approved software will not be permitted. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Students, parents and staff are advised to visit [www webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for information on the safe usage of the internet.
- The use of any form of removal storage or other digital storage media (such as memory sticks, CD-ROMs etc.) requires a teacher's permission.
- Teachers using interactive whiteboards and projectors must be particularly vigilant and must preview the material being presented in order to ensure that it is age appropriate and adheres to the conditions of this AUP.
- Students should never attempt to upload or download software, music or videos without the prior permission of a staff member.
- Students should never access games (or other) websites or apps without the prior permission of a staff member.
- Students will observe good 'netiquette' (i.e. etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute. Good netiquette will be demonstrated to the children through activities on [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie).
- It is important that parents/ guardians and pupils are aware of our AntiBullying Policy in relation to social media.
- However, it should be noted that 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 whether it is sent during school hours or after. It is in the remit of An Garda Síochána to follow up on any reports of Cyber Bullying.
- Specific lessons on Internet Safety and Netiquette will be taught during the year.

### **World Wide Web**

- All websites and apps accessed must be approved by the teacher.

- Neither pupils or staff (including people employed by the school/contractors etc.) may visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials. Any breach will be dealt with by the Board of Management's disciplinary procedures and/or child protection procedures. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- 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.
- Students will use the internet for educational purposes only during class times.
- Students will be taught about copyright issues relating to online learning. Students who copy information or images from the Web into their assignments will acknowledge the source.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

## **Web 2.0**

With the advent of Web 2.0, the internet has become a two-way communication system for the school and the wider community and an invaluable resource for distance learning. Services such as Aladdin, SeeSaw, Facebook, Zoom, Twitter, Padlet and other online tools/ social media may be used by the school to communicate with parents and pupils, and also for parents and pupils to communicate with the school. These services, although not owned by Scoil Cholmcille Greencastle, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy. The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents.

Web 2.0 is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately.

We would ask:

- Many social media sites have minimum age requirements. While the school will not monitor this, we would advise parents to not allow their children to have personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, etc. until they are the appropriate age. Many social media sites will be used by teachers in class, for example, Twitter. However, all interactions will be under the supervision of the teacher.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Zoom, Viber, Whatsapp, Instagram and Picture Gallery etc) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Any online communication with parents/ pupils from the school will be password protected where possible on any online platforms used eg Zoom, Google Drive, Aladdin.

- It is expected that all members of the school community will respect any online communication, via online platforms eg Zoom, Google Service, by not recording any webinar, conversation, video call etc when engaging in distance learning/ school webinars/ online meetings etc.
- Please do not “tag” photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.
  - If you are uploading a photograph, please ensure that it does not identify the child in any way. Please make sure photograph size is kept as small as possible (no bigger than 800x600 pixels)
  - Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages written on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
  - Avoid any negative conversations about children, staff or parents on social media accounts. Please do not request to “friend” a member of staff in the school. The staff would like to keep their personal lives personal. It may be awkward for a staff member to be asked to ignore a Facebook or other social network request.
  - Please do not add advertisements to our wall without prior permission of the principal.
  - If parents/guardians use a Digital Device to record video or take photos at any time on school property e.g. at a school concert the onus is on that parent/guardian to ensure that the recordings/photos are only to be used for personal use. At no time should they be posted on any form of social media. At all times we need to be respectful and vigilant of the privacy and wishes, of other students and families.
  - Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban to our Web 2.0 services and social media accounts.

#### **School Website and Social Media Including Digital Learning Platforms**

- Pupils may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork on the school website and/or social media accounts including digital learning platforms. Eg Seesaw
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated and overseen by a teacher.
- The website/platforms will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff
- Students’ work will appear in an educational context on web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- Digital photographs or video clips of individual students will not be published on the school website. Instead photographs and video clips will focus on group activities.
- Where a photograph, audio or video clip of a child is published, the children’s names will be not be used
- Surnames will never be used on the website. The second initial may be used in cases where there are two people with the same first name.
  - Photographs and video clips should not show children wearing name badges.
  - Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will never be published on the school website.

- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

### **Mobile Phones / Electronic Devices**

- Children should never have a mobile phone or other electronic device at school with them.
- All communication between children and parents during the school day should be through the office or the class teacher.
- Please refer to school Mobile Phone and Devices Policy.

- New devices are being bought for the school including iPads, tablets and chrome books all of which fall under 'Electronic Devices' and therefore are subject to the Acceptable Use Policy.

The following legislation relates to the use of the internet which parents, students and teachers should familiarise themselves with:

- Child Trafficking & Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- GDPR Guidelines 2018
- Anti Bullying Guidelines for Primary Schools (2013)
- Education (Smartphones in Primary Schools) Bill 2024 Support Structures
- NCTE - <http://www.ncte.ie/InternetSafety/>
- Webwise - <http://www.webwise.ie/>
- Make IT Secure - <http://makeitsecure.ie>
- Safe Internet - <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/unsafe/>
- Technical Support – [www.techsure.ie](http://www.techsure.ie)
- Parental Advice and Tips - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/673340parenting/> The Information and Advice for Schools NCTE Handbook, Be Wise on the Net, is available in the school. Sanctions Misuse of the internet may 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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on April 2026.

Signed



Chairperson BOM Scoil Cholmcille, Greencastle

Date 13<sup>th</sup> MAY 2026

