

Internet Safety Acceptable Use Policy

2018- 2019



Mountrath Community School

Ratified by the Board : 11th October 2018

Next Review : October 2019

Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy- Draft

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students and staff 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 Therefore, if the school Acceptable Use Policy is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, up to and including exclusion may be imposed.

Section 1. General

- All users must use their own username and password to log onto a computer.
- Students are not allowed in the computer room without the permission and supervision of a teacher.
- Food and drink are not allowed in computer rooms.
- Users must log off when finished using a computer.
- Internet sessions must 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 will regularly monitor students' Internet usage.
- Students and staff will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of memory sticks or other digital storage media in school must be scanned and requires a teacher's permission to use.
- Students must ask permission to use a printer.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

Section 2. Online Access

- Users will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Users will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Users will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Users will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Users will never disclose or publicise their own or others' personal information.
- Downloading by Users of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Users 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.

Section 3 Social Media

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality and privacy of students, staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites, social networking sites like Snapchat, Facebook, blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, and content sharing sites such as YouTube. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

- Staff and students must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members or any other members of the Mountrath Community School community.
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of Mountrath Community 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 Mountrath Community School into disrepute.
- Staff and students must not represent their personal views as the views of Mountrath Community School on any social media.

4. Email & Communication

- The school encourages all students and staff to use their assigned email account.
- Users will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Users should not under any circumstance share their email account login details with other users
- Users will not reveal their own or other people's personal details; such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Users should avoid opening email that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Users will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Users will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Users will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Users will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school.

5. Images & Video

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to learning, allowing staff and students instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the internet. However, staff, parents / carers and students need to be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the internet. Such images may provide opportunities for harassment or breaches of privacy to take place. Digital images may remain available on the internet forever and may cause harm to individuals in the short or longer term. 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.

At Mountrath Community School students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Taking photos or videos on the grounds of Mountrath Community School or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff. Taking photos or videos on the grounds of Mountrath Community School or when participating in school activities is allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or students of Mountrath Community School.

Students must not 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 illegal, unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. As part of the disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to discipline any student/s where it considers the action warrants such sanctions up to and including suspension and exclusion.

5. School Website

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web in accordance with an 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, privacy, or reputation of students 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.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will avoid publishing the names of individuals in a photograph unless given permission to do so.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

6. Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school should follow the rules set out in this policy, in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons only with express permission from the Special Education Needs Department.
- Students may carry their mobile phone on their person, but it must be turned off, not on silent. The one exception to this rule is during exams, when the Exam Rules will supersede this policy. Mobile phones should NEVER be brought into an exam, and exam papers will be cancelled if it emerges that a student has done so.
- Phones and devices may be used before 1st class begins, during lunch times and break times only.
- Phones and devices should not be used in any way between classes.
- Phones and devices are NEVER to be brought to the sporthall, changing rooms or bathrooms.

- If a student needs to contact home urgently, they will be allowed to use the phone in the Reception. If parents need to contact children urgently, they should phone the Reception.
- If a student breaches these rules the phone (and SIM card) will be confiscated immediately and given to Reception in an envelope with the student's name and the date. This information will be then recorded.
- At all times, the privacy of a student shall be respected. Where the data on a phone is accessed it shall only be to determine whether there has been misuse of the phone, not to monitor the private activities of the owner.

If a phone disturbs a class or if a student is seen using a phone outside the permitted time:

- The phone will be handed up immediately.
- The phone and sim card will be confiscated and handed back by the end of the school day
- A second offence will lead to the phone and sim card being confiscated and will necessitate a parent/guardian coming in to collect it after school.
- A third offence will lead to the phone and sim card being confiscated for one week.

If a phone has been used to take photographs/audio or video footage:

- The phone will be confiscated until the matter can be resolved.
- If the material has been taken without the consent of the subject(s) therein, the student responsible will face appropriate sanctions.
- If the material has been taken without the consent of the subject(s) therein and subsequently posted on the internet, shown to others or distributed in any manner, the student responsible may be suspended and may be recommended for permanent exclusion from the School.
- Depending on the nature of the content viewed, Mountrath Community School reserves the right to contact relevant outside bodies (Gardai, legal advice, HSE, Tusla etc) to determine the appropriate course of action.

Exempt occasions.

There are certain events in the life of the School where it is normal and reasonable for photographs to be taken and where the explicit consent of the subject therein would usually not be required. These include concerts, sports events, TY activities, trips, etc. Students should use discretion as to what is appropriate and must continue to be extremely cautious about posting anything to the internet or showing it to others without achieving the direct consent of those involved. If they are in any doubt at all about what is appropriate, the guidance of a member of staff should be sought in advance. If, in the opinion of the School their actions are deemed to have been inappropriate the sanctions as outlined above shall apply.

7. Support Structures

From time to time the school may see fit to inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

8. Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including verbal warnings, written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, lunchtime detention, report and Friday detentions. As part of the disciplinary action the Board of Management reserves the right to discipline and student/s where it considers the action warrants such sanctions up to and including suspension

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

Mountrath Community School

Student Computer and Network Usage Agreement

Any student who uses the school computer and network facilities does so on the understanding that he/ she agrees to abide by the Mountrath Community School Computer and Network Usage Policy and by the Code of Practice. The primary purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure that all users operate in a safe and secure environment and that the computer and network resources in the School are protected from loss, modification and destruction.

I agree:

1. To use the internet only for educational and career development activities.
2. To use my school email account only for purposes relating to school matters.
3. To accept that any behaviour considered inappropriate in the ordinary world is also considered inappropriate in the virtual world and inappropriate behaviour using the Internet is prohibited.
4. To make no attempt to circumvent data protection schemes, “hack” into systems or interfere with the intended operation of the school computer and network resources and to accept that “hacking” is a serious offence under criminal law.
5. Not to access, download, save, create or transmit unauthorised software, “plug-ins”, games or other entertainment software (including screensavers) or save inappropriate or offensive material.
6. Not to knowingly perform any act which will interfere with the normal operation of computers, peripherals or networks or knowingly destroy the integrity of computer-based information.
7. Not to give another individual unauthorised access to my computer account and to make no attempt to access another individual’s account or files.
8. Not to use the computer and network facilities for unauthorised profit or commercial purposes.
9. Not to engage in activities that are prohibited under Irish Law
10. Not to create or transmit any abusive, obscene, threatening, defamatory, offensive or harassing images or material or cause offence to another individual or discriminate on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religious or political belief, age, disability, race, colour or membership of the traveller community.
11. Not to send or store anonymous e-mails or partake in or promote chain e-mail messages or send unnecessary files that would adversely affect computer and network resources.
12. Not to open email attachments from unsolicited or unknown sources.
13. That by its very nature, the Internet is an insecure network with no guarantee of either privacy or confidentiality for its users and that information posted on the Internet is available to a global audience. I also agree not to post on the Internet any personal information such as home address, telephone numbers, contact details or other personal information about myself or any other person without the expressed permission of the Principal.
14. Not to register or sign “visitors book” on Websites without prior permission.
15. That the school may check my computer files and monitor my school e-mail and Internet activities.

16. To report to the school any suspected abuse of computer and network resources, or any inappropriate material or e-mail that may come to my attention as well as any suspected damage or problems with files.
17. To access the Internet during the period(s) allocated to me for this purpose only.
18. Not to visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
19. Not to store personal documents/ pictures/ music on the school network.
20. Not to copy information from the internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content.
21. That should I fail to comply with any of the preceding conditions, all access privileges may be denied to me and I may be subject to any other disciplinary procedures.
22. As a parent, I understand that my child's work (writing, drawings, etc.) may occasionally be published on the Internet and be accessible on a World Wide Web server. No personal details will be given with student pictures.

I have read the Code of Behaviour and Computer & Network Usage Policy carefully.
I agree to follow the School's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the Internet.
I will use the Internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school

Student's Signature: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that 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.

Parents'/Guardians' Signatures: _____

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11/10/2018 and will be reviewed in September 2021. Before signing, the Acceptable Use Policy should be read carefully to indicate that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

Mary Kavanagh