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14. **General Approach**

The aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from the 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. If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

When using the internet pupils, parents and staff are expected to understand that:

* This Acceptable Use Policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Mary's N.S.
* Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action as per schools Code of Behaviour. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
* St. Mary's N.S. will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases St. Mary's N.S. will, where known, inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place outside of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

St. Mary's N.S. implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

* This policy and its implementation will be reviewed as necessary by the following stakeholders: Board of Management, teaching staff, support staff, pupils, and parents
* This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, ISM team including ICT Co-ordinators, teachers and Board of Management.
* Should serious online safety incidents take place, ICT Co-ordinators Noelle Lane, Cathríona Greally and school Principal Fiona O Callaghan should be informed.
* The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the Principal teacher and all teaching staff.

1. **Content Filtering**

St. Mary's N.S. has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

* Level 4: This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the ‘personal websites’ category and websites such as Facebook which belong to the Social Networking category.

Pupils taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action as per the school’s Code of Behaviour.

1. **Web Browsing and Downloading**

* Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
* Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher.
* Pupils and staff 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.
* Pupils will use the school’s internet connection only for educational development activities.
* Pupils will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.
* Pupils will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
* Downloading by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

1. **Social Media**

* The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in St. Mary's N.S.:
* Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, G Chat etc. is not permitted by pupils in St. Mary's N.S.
* Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.
* Staff and pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, other members of the St. Mary's N.S. community
* Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St. Mary's N.S. community on social media.
* Staff and pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
* Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Mary's N.S. into disrepute.

1. **Images & Video**

* Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
* In St. Mary's N.S. pupils 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 and is only allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or pupils of St. Mary's N.S.
* Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website.
* Pupils 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 explicit images of pupils and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other pupils automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

1. **Cyberbullying**

* When using the internet pupils, 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 pupil 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 pupils 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 cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school.
* Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Anti-Cyberbullying Policy.
* The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

1. **School Website**

* Pupils may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school 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.
* The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher and/or Principal.
* St. Mary's N.S. will use only 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 not be published on St. Mary's N.S. web pages.
* The St. Mary's N.S. will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

1. **Email**

* Pupils will only use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
* Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
* Pupils will not reveal their own or other people’s personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
* Pupils will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
* Pupils will be made aware that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher. Opening of such attachments may only be done when approved by the teacher.
* Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
* Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.

1. **iPads**

* Pupils should never leave their iPad unattended when in use.
* Pupils should follow teacher’s instructions accessing only the applications to which the teacher has agreed.
* Pupils require permission before sending any form of electronic message.
* Audio or visual material taken at school cannot be transmitted, broadcast or transferred without the teacher’s permission.
* The camera and audio recording functions may only be used under the teachers’ direction.
* Identity theft (Pretending to be someone else) is in direct breach of the school’s acceptable use policy.
* In the event of a child accidently accessing inappropriate material or images during a lesson, the pupil will immediately minimize the page and report the incident to the class teacher without attracting the attention of other students.
* iPads must be handled with care at all times.
* Any damage to the device must be reported immediately to the teacher.

1. **Personal Devices**

* Any incident of pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance text messages, or the unauthorized taking of images with a mobile phone camera, still or moving is in direct breach of the school’s Acceptable Use Policy and Mobile Phone Policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

1. **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 (Amendment) Act 2003
* Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
* Interception Act 1993
* Video Recordings Act 1989
* The Data Protection Act 1988

1. **Support Structures**

* The school will inform pupils and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.
* Teachers will give instruction on appropriate use of the internet and how to use it safely.
* Workshops on internet safety will be provided for pupils in senior classes, and their parents.
* In St. Mary’s NS, we use the services of the NCTE , [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie/) and [www.safety.ie](http://www.safety.ie/).
* Community Gardaí link in with classes re Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying annually.

1. **Ratification:**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 19/11/19

**Signed: J. Fitzpatrick**

**Chairperson, Board of Management**