



St. Brendan's PS
Moorpark, Birr, Co. Offaly

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St. Brendan's PS

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Date of Commencement: 06/11/2023

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General Approach

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.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

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:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.



This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Brendan's PS.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

St. Brendan's PS will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases St. Brendan's PS will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

St. Brendan's PS implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- St. Brendan's PS participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

Board of Management

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, ICT coordinator, teachers and school digital team.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:



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- Logs of reported incidents.
 - Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited).
 - Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils.
 - Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, Mr. Niall Crofton, School Principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by school principal and ICT coordinator.



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Content Filtering

St. Brendan's PS has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

Split Level - This level allows different filtering levels for different ages / stages and different groups of users; staff / pupils / students etc.



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 report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to teacher known to student.

Students 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.

Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.

Students 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.

Students 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 students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.

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.



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Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.



Email and Messaging

Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at St. Brendan's PS

Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Students should immediately 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 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 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. Pupils should report any such communications to a teacher.



Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of our school community are expected to follow when using social media.

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

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, Instagram and TikTok), blogs, mircoblogs such as Twitter/X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. **The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.**

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in St. Brendan's PS:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in St. Brendan's PS.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.

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.



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Staff and students must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St. Brendan's PS 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 St. Brendan's PS into disrepute.

Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of bring St. Brendan's PS on any social medium.

Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>



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Personal Devices

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in St. Brendan's PS:

- Students are only allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into St. Brendan's PS with expressed permission from staff.
- Example mobile phone on school tour or gaming device in school to mark school holiday at Easter, Christmas etc...



Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

St. Brendan's PS digital learning platform (Seesaw) is managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.

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 will be provided with their own unique login credentials.

Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.

Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.

Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.



Images and Video

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 St. Brendan's PS students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Taking photos or videos on school grounds of pupils or staff or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances.

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 an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- 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 (e.g. 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



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- Online gaming
 - Online gambling
 - Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
 - Child sexual abuse material
 - Any other activity considered questionable



School Website/Facebook/Twitter(X)

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 platform.

Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

The platforms will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

Platforms allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.

St. Brendan's PS will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.

The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on St. Brendan's PS web pages.



Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. 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.

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, St. Brendan's PS considers that 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.



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Measures are taken by St. Brendan's PS 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 behavior.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.



Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarize 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 organizations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.



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Board of Management

This AUP was adopted by the Board of Management on 19th October 2023

Signed: 

Mr Pat Teehan (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Niall Crofton'.

Mr. Niall Crofton (Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management)

Date: 19/10/2023