

# INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

## **RATIONALE**

These guidelines were introduced in 1999 and reviewed in May 2011 and October 2015 and in June 2019. As we have chromebooks/laptops and iPads in each classroom it is necessary to set clear guidelines for all pupils and staff. Reviewed in October 2020 in light of use of online learning due to Covid-19, and in October 2022. Current review February 2025.

Internet access is available to all our pupils. Our school is pleased to offer this tool as an available resource to both pupils and teachers for reference purposes, for researching project materials and for education. Pupils now have access to thousands of libraries, databases and resources on every subject.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental for preparation for living and working in the information age. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources.

Pupil use of telecommunications and electronic information will be provided and only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and by pupils themselves.

## **ICT and Legislation**

The following legislation is relevant to Internet Safety.

- Data Protection Act 1998 - this act was passed in order to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on a computer about individuals.
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 - this amendment extends the data protection rules to manually held records and also makes improvements to the public's right to access data.
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 - this act legislates against anyone who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses or sells child pornography.
- Interception Act 1993 – this act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence. Authorisations are subject to certain conditions.
- Video Recordings Act 1989 - this act prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material which may lead to the depravation or corruption of the viewer.
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000 – this act governs copyright in Ireland.
- General Data Personal Regulation (GDPR)

*See our Data Protection Policy.*

## **Risks associated with the Internet**

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources and will be protected from harmful and illegal use of the Internet.

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra will employ a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

Categories of risk associated with children using the internet include:

- Exposure to illegal and/or harmful images and text, whether violent, racist or explicit in nature.
- Receipt of messages that are demeaning, threatening or in other ways disturbing or detrimental to a child's wellbeing.
- The possibility of being lured into a physical encounter that might threaten a child's safety and wellbeing.
- Risk that the child might upload inappropriate content.

## **Strategies for reducing risk to children are as follows:**

1. Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)
2. Education
3. Filtering/Monitoring
4. Supervision
5. Password protection on all computers.
6. No communication with any person online without teacher permission and strict adherence to our 'Guidelines for Internet Use'.

## **E-Mail**

Electronic mail, or e-mail, allows communication with peers and educationalists around the world. In general, pupils are not allowed access to e-mail outside of accessing internet/chromebooks in a supervised setting. In the event that access is allowed, pupils will send and receive e-mail during supervised sessions. Personal information about the child will not be disclosed without permission from the teacher supervising the session. E-mail messages for pupils will only be sent and received through the school e-mail address. A staff member will read these messages. Pupils will not be allowed to have a personal e-mail address in school.

For pupils using email, the following rules will apply:

1. E-mail will be used for educational purposes only
2. Students will only use approved class e-mail accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher

3. Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
4. Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details e.g. addresses, telephone numbers, or pictures via school e-mail
5. Pupils will never arrange to meet someone via school e-mail
6. Sending or receiving e-mail attachments is subject to teacher permission.

### **World Wide Web**

Access to on-line resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world. Access will be kept to certain sites that are of relevance to the pupils e.g. Scoil Net, World book Online, etc. The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration exceed the disadvantages. **Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher/staff supervision.** The school's broadband is filtered by the NCTE which blocks out webpages containing expletive words, explicit pictures, or unsuitable content. Staff may regularly check computer logs of all information accessed by pupils. The following conditions apply to use of the internet by pupils:

1. Internet will be used for educational purposes only
2. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher
3. Pupils will seek permission before entering any internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher
4. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
5. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage
6. Pupils will receive training in the area of internet safety
7. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites
8. Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues
9. Uploading and downloading of non-approved material is banned
10. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis
11. The use of personal external storage devices – USB sticks or Drive/cloud-based accounts - in school requires a teacher's permission
12. Pupils will observe good 'netiquette' (etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring a school into disrepute
13. 'YouTube' (and similar social media sites) can be accessed only under the supervision and direction of the teacher. Other social media sites are filtered (Facebook, snapchat etc.) and access is not allowed.

### **Pupils Guidelines for Internet Use**

- Pupils are responsible for good behaviour on the internet just as they are in a classroom or on a school corridor. General school rules apply.
- Access is a privilege, not a right and that access requires responsibility.
- Messages should be polite and sensible. Bad language and messages that could be offensive to another person are prohibited.
- Pupils must not look at or delete other people's files or change school passwords.

- Pupils may not put their own passwords or software or create internet or e-mail accounts on school computers.
- Pupils must not bring software or USB sticks into the school without permission.
- Pupils must not communicate with any person online without teacher permission.
- Pupils will not use the internet to seek, read, print, or download any information in any media that would be considered harmful or in any way detrimental to the health, well-being, positive development of the pupil by the school staff or by the pupil's parents or guardians. Teacher's permission must be obtained to print or download any text, images, software or other data from the Internet.
- If a pupil sees anything they are unhappy with or receive a message they do not like, they must tell a member of staff immediately.
- No personal information such as your home address or telephone number, or the address or telephone number of another person, is to be given out..
- Be familiar with these rules and how to use the internet before going on-line. If you have any questions about these rules students should ask their teacher for clarification.
- Pupils and parents must sign and adhere to the Responsible Internet Use Undertaking (appendix A)
- Pupils need to become internet savvy about:
  1. Passwords: 'Your password is like your toothbrush – you wouldn't pass it around.'
  2. Privacy settings.
  3. Digital footprint: What goes online stays online forever – even when deleted the footprint still remains. This can be important for a child into the future and for work.
  4. Even when acting anonymously there is no guarantee that you can avoid detection.
  5. Cyberbullying:
    - It can occur 24/7
    - A once-off incidence can be considered bullying
    - It is conducted in private
    - A negative message can be read over and over again
    - The message can be made anonymously.
    - Sometimes the person who wrote the message can be unaware of the hurt they are causing.
    - It is widespread
    - 'Bystanders' who like or comment on negative or hurtful messages are also bullying.

*See our Cineáltas Policy.*

## **PUPILS:**

### **Use of school-owned devices within or outside of school**

- Pupils and parents have a responsibility to use the school's computer system in a professional, lawful and ethical manner.
- Pupils should always be supervised by parents when using a school-owned device.

- Pupils/parents should only install or remove software onto a school-owned device with prior approval by the school principal.
- Pupils/parent must not access inappropriate materials when using school-owned devices at school or when using school-owned devices when working outside school. Doing so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Our Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to all members of the school community when using any school-owned devices when working outside school.

### **SEESAW: or other online learning platforms**

Seesaw is an online learning platform which allows teachers and pupils to upload educational content in different formats (photos, video, links, document, voice message). We adopted this platform in light of the Coronavirus pandemic in order to facilitate distance learning. Parents signed a consent form (Appendix B) in April 2020. As classroom teaching has resumed, there will be very little use of this platform at the moment. Our Child Protection Risk assessment and updated our Data Protection Policy reflects our use of this platform. Seesaw operates a robust privacy policy which is an appendix of our GDPR policy.

The following Code of Conduct applies to Seesaw and other e-learning environments:

### **Seesaw Code of Conduct**

In order to create a safe and supportive online learning environment, the following guidelines have been put in place to protect Scoil Mhuire students and staff and to promote learning.

- You should treat your video at a live online session the same as a face-to-face session.
- When posting/creating a video, teachers and pupils should be dressed appropriately and in an appropriate environment for participation in a video or live online session.
- When your video is turned on, make sure you don't sit directly in front of or beside a bright light source, as only a bright light and a shadowy figure will be seen.
- Think about your actions on camera. Always remember that this will be seen by others.
- Videos/pictures that are to be uploaded should be recorded in a common family area, not a bedroom. No family pictures or identifiable features should be shown in the background.
- Parents are asked to supervise their children while they are on the Seesaw platform.
- When uploading videos/pictures/sound clips, parents must ensure that they are appropriate and upload to Seesaw only.
- Parents must ensure that all uploaded content is work assigned or responses to work assigned by teachers.
- Items posted on Seesaw by pupils or teachers must not be shared outside of the platform by any means, whether by social media, electronically or in any other form.

## **ZOOM**

We may use Zoom on as a method of communication.

Rules governing the use of Seesaw also apply to the Zoom platform. Our Remote Teaching and Learning Plan also covers the use of Zoom as an online tool.

Parent's e-mails may be used to inform them of Zoom meetings. Meeting will not be recorded.

Staff conducting Zoom meetings are aware of the risk of hacking/intrusion on meetings. They will respond by ending the meeting immediately

Parents and staff are aware of our Remote Teaching and Learning Plan which explicitly disallows the sharing by pupils, parents, teachers, or administrators using online platforms such as Seesaw and Zoom, any content outside of the platform whether on social media or by any other means, electronic or concrete.

## **Social Media**

Pupils must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, school staff or other members of the school community. This applies to both in school online communication and outside of school online communication.

Pupils must not post or share personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the school community on social media.

Pupils must not seek to 'friend' any member of school staff using any social media facility.

The use of all instant messaging services or apps including Snapchat, Whatsapp, etc. by pupils is strictly forbidden in school or on any school devices.

Access to blogs may be allowed in school for educational use only under the guidance and permission of teaching staff.

Access to video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. may be allowed for educational purposes only with guidance and permission of teaching staff.

Pupils must not engage in activities involving social media or any form of communications technology, which might bring the school into disrepute.

## **Cyberbullying:**

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an “offline” experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

Pupils are expected to treat others with respect at all times when using any form of communications technology either as part of school based learning or for personal use outside of school

Awareness of and the prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of our Anti-Bullying policy.

Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Parents/Guardians are expected to take responsibility for their child’s behaviour online ~~use of ICT~~ and while using electronic devices (including mobile phones) and should monitor their child/children outside of school. School authorities cannot be responsible for pupil online behaviour that arises outside of the school environment. However the school will co-operate in so far as is possible with parents/guardians in dealing with reports of inappropriate online incidents that impact on the wellbeing of pupils and/or staff. Such matters will be dealt with in so far as is deemed necessary under the school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

### **Sanctions for the misuse of Internet by pupils**

The misuse or unlawful use of the Internet electronic equipment during school /class time by pupils will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the school’s Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying Policy, and Mobile Phone/Electronic Devices and Games Policy. Sanctions will include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges to internet and other school related privileges and, in extremely serious cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal or inappropriate activities to the relevant statutory authorities ie Gardaí, TUSLA, Office of the Data Commissioner etc.

### **School Website**

Designated member/s of the school community will manage the publication of material on the school website.

1. Personal pupil information, home addresses and contact details will not be published on the school website
2. Class lists will not be published
3. Pupils' full details will not be published beside their photograph
4. Digital photographs, video clips and audio clips will focus on groups and group activities rather than on individual pupils
5. Pupils will be given an opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website
6. Teachers will select work to be published and decide on the appropriateness of such
7. Permission to publish a student's work will be sought from pupils/ parents/ guardians. This permission may be withdrawn at any time.
8. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

### **STAFF /VISITORS:**

#### **Recording of Images & Video**

- Staff will only use school digital cameras and school iPads/other school equipment for the recording of images and video of pupils for school related purposes. Staff will not take photos or video pupils or school activities on personal mobile phones.

#### **Social Media**

- Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, school staff, or other members of the school community.
- School staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not post or share personal information, use, share, publish or distribute images about pupils, staff and other members of the school community on any form of social media sites etc.
- Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not engage in activities involving social media or any form of communications technology which might bring the school into disrepute.
- All members of staff have a responsibility to use the school's computer system in a professional, lawful and ethical manner.
- Staff must not access inappropriate materials at school when using school-owned or personal devices or when using school-owned devices when working outside school. Doing so will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Our Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to staff using any school-owned devices when working outside school.

#### **Internet Access/Web Browsing and Downloading**

- Teachers must always supervise access to the internet by pupils and websites should always be previewed before presentation to the class. Where teachers seek to integrate a web page into a lesson, the web page must be fully previewed/evaluated to screen for inappropriate content, imagery, and text.

- Staff will ensure that school WiFi, Aladdin Pupil Management System and network administrator passwords are not disclosed to pupils or non-staff members.
- Use of the internet by staff members or authorised school visitors/agencies to access or download offensive or inappropriate material is strictly prohibited at all times. Staff or authorised school visitors/agencies are not permitted to alter the school broadband filtering preferences in any form or manner.
- Staff members may access the internet for personal purposes outside of pupil-teacher contact time only.
- Teaching practice students, transition year pupils or adults or students on a work experience/placement may only access the computer facilities with the permission of their mentor or supervising class teacher. All teaching practice and placement students must adhere to our Acceptable Internet Use policy.

## **Education**

Scoil Mhuire, Clondra will consistently educate children on the safe, responsible use of the internet. This education will continue and be reinforced on an ongoing basis.

21<sup>st</sup> century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become internet wise.

### **Resources that may be used to implement this programme include**

- NCTE Internet Safety Awareness Video
- [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) website has excellent resources for the entire school community.
- SAFT Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme and exemplars
- Garda Primary Schools Programme

## **Filtering**

‘Filtering’ is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance.

Many browsers have their own built in filtering tool e.g. Google. Google’s search engine has a built-in “Safe Search”. This filter eliminates sites that contain pornography and explicit sexual content from search results. It is easily applied by clicking on the **Preferences** link on any Google page. Unfortunately it is also easily removed. Search engines like ‘Kiddle’ have child-safe filters.

The access to websites from all school computers is filtered, monitored and regularly reviewed by the NCCA. Websites are only allowed following a verification of their suitability.

## **Firewalls**

Our computers have a built-in firewall. We also have protection software, some of which is purchased (e.g. Nortons) or downloaded free from the internet (e.g. Avast).

## **Useful websites for further information on online and communications technology.**

- [www.iab.ie](http://www.iab.ie) (Internet Advisory Board)
- [www.esafety.ie](http://www.esafety.ie) (Internet Safety Seminars for Schools/Parents)
- [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) (Information on Various Forms of Internet Usage): Get With it (Parents Guide to Cyberbullying)
- [www.ncte.ie](http://www.ncte.ie) (Information on ICT in Education)

## **Links with other School Policies**

This policy is linked to the following school policies:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices and Games Policy.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in February 2028, or as the need arises.

## **RATIFICATION**

This policy was ratified on \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mrs Mary Duignan

Chairperson, Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, Co. Longford.

## Appendix A – Responsible Internet Use Undertaking

As part of the school’s education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. This allows pupils vast educational opportunities by helping them for example, locate material for projects, communicate with students from different cultures, become independent in controlling their own research and become independent learners.

Parents should discuss this undertaking document with their children to ensure that they clearly understand the school rules with regard to Internet usage. These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

When using a school-owned device, whether at home or at school:

- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site
- I will not bring external storage devices (such as memory sticks/USB keys etc.) into school without permission
- I will not use email for personal reasons
- I will only use email for school projects and with my teacher’s permission
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible
- When sending e-mail, I will not give my home address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone
- I will ask for permission before opening an e-mail or an e-mail attachment
- I will not communicate with anyone online without the permission of my teacher.
- If I see anything I am unhappy with or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the sites I visit
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ Pupil(s)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child’s schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the school’s website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Usage Policy in relation to publishing pupils’ work and photographs of school activities on the website.

**Signature:** 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Legal Guardians

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Seesaw consent form for parents

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In order to communicate more effectively with our pupils, we will be using the online service, Seesaw (<http://seesaw.me>). This is a secure online journal where students can document and reflect on what they are learning. Your child will be able to add the things we work on (including photos, videos, worksheets, drawings and voice recordings) to their Seesaw journal. Your child's teacher can see and correct your child's work and give individual feedback to them. Other class members cannot see or access your child's work.

We will give more instructions on how to use the app at a later date. If children are including video or photographs of their work, we request that they do not include themselves or other people in the images.

In order for your child to use Seesaw, the app needs your child's name so that it can associate work like their photos, videos or voice recordings with their account. Seesaw only uses this information to provide the service and doesn't advertise in Seesaw, create profiles of students, or share or sell your child's personal information or journal content. You can read more about their strong privacy promises here: <https://web.seesaw.me/privacy>.

Under an EU law called the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in order for your child to use Seesaw, the school must get your consent. For more information on GDPR, please visit <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/reform/rights-citizens>.

I hope that your child will enjoy using Seesaw and that it will make communication between you and the school more effective during this trying time. Please sign below and return this permission slip by e-mail to [2020schoolclosure@gmail.com](mailto:2020schoolclosure@gmail.com) so that your child can use Seesaw. Given the current circumstances, typed consent is considered acceptable. **If you have more than one child attending the school, please send in a separate form for each child.**

When we get your permission, we will give further details on how to download and access the app.

Yours sincerely,  
Melissa Husey, Principal

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### **Please sign below and return the form.**

I give consent for my child, listed below, to use Seesaw for class activities at Scoil Mhuire, Clondra, Co Longford.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_