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Internet Acceptable Use Policy

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1. Introduction

The aim of this AUP is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the Scoil Naomh Mhuire'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, it is crucial to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the Internet safely.

The policy applies to all 'internet-enabled devices' including but not limited to- computers, iPads, laptops, smartphones, smartwatches and other IT resources connected to the internet. It also covers device use (whether school-owned or personal) during school activities or transportation to and from these activities.

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, students and members of the Board of Management. It will be carefully reviewed to ensure understanding and acceptance of its contents.

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.

This AUP applies to staff, pupils and the whole school community of Scoil Naomh Mhuire who have access to and are users of the internet in Scoil Naomh Mhuire.

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.

2. Staff Responsibilities

Scoil Naomh Mhuire's computers and networks must be used responsibly, ethically and in accordance with the law.
Staff will:

- Implement and adhere to the guidelines outlined in this AUP.
- Oversee pupil ICT usage, documenting and reporting any misuse of devices to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

3. School Strategies

Scoil Naomh Mhuire implements the following strategies to promote safer use of the internet:

- The Schools Broadband Programme provides the filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. The school's content filtering is set at 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 belonging to the Social Networking category. Students taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to appropriate sanctions (see section 16.)

- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.

- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.

- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.

- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas (e.g. using lessons from Stay Safe, Zeeko, Webwise etc.)

- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.

- Participate in Internet Safety Day activities to promote safer and more effective use of the internet.

- Bí Cineálta Policy: This policy should be read in conjunction with the Bí Cineálta Policy. (see Section 13 *Cyberbullying*.)

4. 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 their class teacher.

- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).

- 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.

- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

5. 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 Scoil Naomh Mhuire.

- 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 will only access Google Drive through class accounts set up by teachers. Staff only are permitted to log in to these accounts. These emails and passwords will not be shared with the pupils.

- Staff should not use classroom email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.

- 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.

- All comments and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

6. Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Scoil Naomh Mhuire:

- 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.

- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Scoil Naomh Mhuire 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 Scoil Naomh Mhuire into disrepute.

- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

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

7. Personal Devices

Students using the school's technology should follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

The following statement apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Scoil Naomh Mhuire:

- Students are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into Scoil Naomh Mhuire, this includes smartphones and Smart watches.

8. Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

- 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 Google Drive.

- The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).

- Each permanent staff member will be provided with their own unique log in credentials. These accounts will be modified in line with staff changes.

- 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.

9. Audio, images and video

- At Scoil Naomh Mhuire, staff are permitted to record audio, take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others provided they have been granted permission. Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before video, audio or photographs of students are published on the school website.

- External agencies must provide their own permission forms with regards to recording audio, taking, using, sharing or publishing images. Written permission from parents or carers must be obtained before video, audio or photographs of students are published on the school website.

- Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or pupils of Scoil Naomh Mhuire.

- Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed to be taken by the staff.

- Students must not share audio, 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/video and in particular explicit images/video of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

10. 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
- Online gaming (apart from educational games)
- Online gambling
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material

11. School Website

- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.
- Scoil Naomh Mhuire 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 Scoil Naomh Mhuire web pages.
- Scoil Naomh Mhuire will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.
- Content posted on the school website should not be copied and shared with others or to other social media websites.

12. Permission

Scoil Naomh Mhuire asks for parental permission before posting photos of children or their work on the school website to protect the privacy and safety of all pupils. This ensures that

families have control over how their child's image or work is shared online. Permission forms are provided when a child joins the school, and staff are informed of any pupils who have not been granted permission, so that their wishes are respected at all times.

13. Cyberbullying

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Schools, Scoil Naomh Mhuire considers that posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

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, cyberbullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyberbullying. 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 Bí Cineálta Procedures for Schools, Scoil Naomh Mhuire will support any pupils experiencing cyberbullying but cannot investigate any incident.

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.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the Bí Cineálta policy of our school.

In accordance with the Department of Education Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools; a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

14. Artificial Intelligence

- Scoil Naomh Mhuire recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use by staff within our learning environment.

- Scoil Naomh Mhuire integrates AI into its educational processes to enhance learning, foster innovation, and promote the development of critical skills.

- Scoil Naomh Mhuire will make necessary adjustments to our school use and integration of AI based on review and feedback.

- Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.

- Teachers will attribute AI text and images when used.

15. 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 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

16. Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. These sanctions include 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, including An Garda Síochána.

17. Review and Ratification

The school will conduct a regular review of this AUP policy and reserves the right to modify or revise its usage in accordance with school developments.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on 26/11/ 2025