St. Mark's Boy's National School

Acceptable Use Policy

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils 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 Therefore, if the school's AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed. The Board of Management will review the AUP regularly. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

Our School's Strategy

The Internet and digital media can help our pupils learn, create and communicate in ways that we would never have imagined in our youth. The online world is very much part of their lives, they are "growing up digitally" with technology embedded in every aspect of their lives. Digital literacy skills are key life skills for children and young people today. They need to be media savvy and know how to effectively search for and evaluate online content; know how to protect personal information and reputation; know to respect copyright and intellectual property and know where to get help if problems arise. The Internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It can develop children's independent research skills and promote lifelong learning. The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. The school's policy is to look for opportunities across the curriculum to reinforce online safety messages.

Security Measures

- Internet use by children in school will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software such as the Schools Broadband Programme will be used in order to minimize the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The Irish Schools Broadband Programme provides an integrated set of services to schools which includes broadband connectivity and services including content filtering, web hosting, and security services. These services are managed by the NCTE working closely with the Department of Education and Science and are coordinated and supported by the NCTE Service Desk which is the single point of contact for schools for all broadband related issues, providing information, advice and support to schools.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Students will be provided with lessons in the area of Internet safety, for example internet safety week.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be 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 requires a teacher's permission.

- Children are expected to respect computers, hardware, and software and not to intentionally waste limited resources in school such as paper or ink.
- Students will observe good "netiquette" (etiquette in the internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

Use of the Internet

- Students will use the Internet in school for educational purposes only.
- In the event of a child accidentally accessing inappropriate material or images during a lesson, the student will immediately alert the teacher without attracting the attention of other students. The teacher should report the incident to the ICT Co-coordinator.
- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students 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.

iPads

- Students should never leave their iPad unattended when in use
- Students should follow the teacher's instructions accessing only the applications to which the teacher has agreed.
- Students require permission before sending any form of electronic message.
- Audio or visual material recorded 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.
- iPads must be handled with care at all times.
- Any damage to the device must be reported immediately to the teacher.

E - Mail

As a general policy statement St. Marks will not permit the use of e-mail platforms by pupils. However, emails are used to communicate with parents and guardians.

Online Learning

In the event of school closures, we will engage in online learning. All pupils will have access to an online classroom via the See Saw app. From third class upwards children will engage in individual and group Zoom calls with a class teacher. Parents must be present for Zoom calls. Parents emails are used for creating the accounts for online learning. Children will never be placed in breakout rooms on zoom calls.

Legislation

Information is available on the Internet on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet for teachers, students and parents should they wish to access it;

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

School Website

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish work on the school website.
- Personal pupil's information (name, address etc.) will be omitted from the school web pages.
- The website will be checked regularly to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.

School Facebook Page

- St. Mark's B.N.S. has a school Facebook page to share pupil's work and to connect with our parent body and the wider community.
- The page is closely monitored by the administrators to ensure that the Facebook page is a positive place for all.

Parental Consent

Our enrolment forms require parents and guardians to state if they wish their child to be a part of our school website and school Facebook page. This information is communicated to all staff.

Personal Devices

- Pupils are not permitted to bring personal devices to school.
- In the event of needing their device after school, a parent or guardian must communicate this with the principal and it will be stored in the office until home time.

Staff

- The Internet is available for Staff personal and professional use. Personal use of the Internet should not occur during class time or supervision time.

Support Structures

- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet, for example, www.webwise.ie
- From time to time parents will receive information and advice regarding Internet safety in the home.
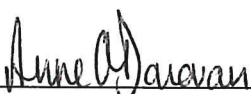
Sanctions

- Some material available on the Internet is unsuitable for children and therefore the guidelines in this policy must be adhered to at all times. Access to the Internet will be withdrawn from pupils who fail to maintain acceptable standards of use. Internet access in school includes a strict filtering service yet no filtering service is completely fool proo.
- Intentional misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action including written warnings, and withdrawal of access privileges.
- All of these sanctions are in line with our schools Code of Behaviour.

Consultation and communication regarding the plan:

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff while cognisant of pupils' and parents' needs. It was built upon the previous Acceptable Use policy and amended to reflect changes in legislation Children First Addendum 2019) and Departmental guidance (DE Circular 0038/2018) The attention of all new families will be drawn to this policy upon registration in the school. All new and temporary staff will be informed of the details of the plan by the Management & Droichead Teams where appropriate.

This policy will be published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

Ratification of the plan: This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 01/02/2022, and will be reviewed in June 2024. It may be reviewed at an earlier date, to reflect changes in legislation or in other school policies (e.g. review of Child Safeguarding or Data Protection policies).

Signed: _Anne M Caravan_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 01/02/2022

Signed: _Johanna Carroll_

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date of next review: June 2024