



## Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

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 Therefore, if the school's AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.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 minimise 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, webhosting, 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 and teachers will be provided with training and information in the area of Internet safety. (e.g. [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie))
- 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 minimize the page and report the incident to the class teacher without attracting the attention of other students. The teacher should report the incident to the ICT Co-coordinator.
- A list of appropriate websites will be made available to every teacher. Also a list of educational websites will be saved in the favourites folder on the school computers.
- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- 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.

## Tablets/Laptops

- Students should never leave their devices unattended when in use
- Students should follow 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 vision taken at school cannot be transmitted, broadcast or transferred without the teachers' 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 accidentally accessing inappropriate material or images during a lesson, the student will immediately minimize the page and report the incident to the class teacher without attracting the attention of other students.
- All equipment must be handled with care at all times.
- Any damage to the device must be reported immediately to the teacher.

## Email



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- Students may use approved email accounts under supervision by or with permission from the class teacher.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Children are not allowed to access their own email accounts in school.
- 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 note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.

## Legislation

Information is available on the Internet on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2003/en/act/pub/0006/index.html>
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0022/index.html>
- Interception Act 1993  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1993/en/act/pub/0010/print.html>
- Video Recordings Act 1989  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1989/en/act/pub/0022/index.html>
- The Data Protection Act 1988  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1988/en/act/pub/0025/index.html>

## School Website & Facebook Page

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to have their work published on the school website and Facebook page.
- Digital photographs of individual pupils will not be published on the school website. Photographs will focus on groups rather than individuals.
- Personal pupil's information (name, address etc) will be omitted from the school web pages.
- Pupils will continue to own copyright on any work published. The website will be checked regularly to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.

### Personal Devices



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- Pupils using their own technology in school, such as a mobile phone, 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.
- No mobile phones are to be brought to school - see the school's Mobile Phone Policy.

## **Direct Communication using Internet**

Teachers in the school may choose to use a number of tools for classroom communication. Examples include Edmodo, Youtube, Google Classroom, Webex, Zoom, SeeSaw, and ClassDojo. Some of these tools provide synchronous video opportunities whereby a staff member directly speaks to the children live - e.g. through a webinar or online meeting. The staff member invites pupils and their families to these meetings using a code. The following are ground rules for synchronous lessons online.

- All meetings will be password protected
- All people involved in the meeting will conduct themselves in a similar manner that would be expected in a regular class.
- The staff member has the right to remove any person being disruptive from a synchronous lesson.
- A family member is expected to be close by when a pupil is engaging in a meeting. They should monitor all online interactions from the pupil.
- Staff will not meet any child alone using an online meeting. If there is a need for a meeting between a child with a staff member, another adult must be present at the meeting.
- While chat may be available in an online meeting, it is the responsibility of the child's family to ensure that any interaction is appropriate. Any interaction from a pupil that could be deemed as inappropriate may result in the child's removal from the lesson or, where appropriate, a referral to Child Protection services.

## **Staff**

- The Internet is available for Staff personal and professional use. Personal use of the Internet should not occur during class 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.
- From time to time parents will receive information and advice regarding Internet safety in the home.



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## 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 foolproof.
- Procedures are in place should a child accidentally access inappropriate material and also should a child deliberately abuse the use of the Internet in school.
- Intentional misuse of the Internet or hardware will 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.
- All of these sanctions are in line with our schools discipline policy.

The AUP Policy for Mercy School St. John's Road was ratified by the Board of Management:

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

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

**Chairperson of BoM**

**Principal/Secretary to the BoM**

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

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

## Permission Form

**Name of Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please review the schools Acceptable Use Policy then sign and return this permission form to the class teacher.

### **Pupil**

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the Internet. I will use the Internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school.

Pupil's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian**



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As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

**I accept the above paragraph**

**I do not accept the above paragraph**   
*(Please tick as appropriate)*

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website or Facebook. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing children's work on the school website.

**I accept the above paragraph**

**I do not accept the above paragraph**   
*(Please tick as appropriate)*

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

## Acceptable Use Policy

Mercy School has an Acceptable Use Policy in place to ensure that all pupils benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet and digital media resources in a safe and effective manner.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

- I will only go on websites that have been approved by my teacher. I will not visit an inappropriate site on purpose.
- If I accidentally access an inappropriate site or image, I will minimise the page and tell the teacher immediately, without attracting the attention of those around me.
- I will use the Internet and digital media for educational purposes only.
- I will always use a safe search engine such as image bank on [www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie) to look up images.



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- I will refrain from directly copying information from the Internet into my own work. I will always use my own words.
- I will never download images or words that have nothing to do with my school work.
- I am fully aware that everything I do on a school computer/laptop is monitored by the school.
- I will never access my personal email account in school.
- I will never access chat rooms in school.

## **In and Out of school**

- I will follow the school's policy on Mobile Phones.
- I will never send text messages, emails and comments that are harmful and hurtful to another person.
- I will never give out my name, address, phone number to anyone online.
- I will not share personal information about another person online.
- I will always use my Username and not my real name on websites so that I can protect my identity.
- I will never arrange to meet in person anyone I meet online.
- I will not use my phone/I pad/ or any device to take photos of people without their permission.
- I will not upload any photos without getting permission.
- My password is my own and I will not share it- even with my best friend.

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

## **Student Pledge for school device use (laptop, tablet, etc.)**

- I will take good care of school devices.
- I will never leave the equipment unattended.
- I will keep food and drinks away from any device since they may cause damage.
- I will not disassemble any part of my device or attempt any repairs.
- I will use my device in ways that are appropriate.
- I understand that the device I may use is subject to inspection at any time without notice.
- I will only photograph people with their permission.
- I will only use the camera or the microphone when my teacher tells me to.



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- I will only use my device as instructed by the teacher and use the right app/ programme at the right time.
- I will never use another person's device to cause offence or damage or upset.
- I will never share any images or movies of people in a public space on the Internet, unless I am asked to do so by my Teacher.

I agree to abide by the statements of this device acceptable use policy

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_