



Coláiste Éamonn Rís

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

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.

School's Strategy:

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:

General:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor students' internet usage
- Students and teachers should be provided with training in the area of Internet safety
- 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 personal external digital storage media in school, requires a teacher's permission
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute

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 use the Internet for educational purposes only
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement)
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords
- 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 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

Email

- Students will use approved school email accounts
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person
- 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 not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or "reply all" without the permission of the originator
- Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school based work
- Students should not use school 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.

- Students should report any such communications to a teacher
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. Students should report any suspicious emails to a teacher
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school

Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

- 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 students, staff and other members of the school 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 the school into disrepute
- Staff and students must not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social media service or message services
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media

Schools can also direct staff to Guidance for Registered Teachers about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication.

Guidance for Teachers

Schools may also direct staff to Guidance for Registered Teachers 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>

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

- The school's digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform
- Use of email accounts (as noted above)
- 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 should have their own unique login credentials. Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms
- Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared

Remote Learning:

Refer to Coláiste Éamonn Rís Blended Teaching and Learning Policy.

Audio, images and video

- Care should be taken when capturing audio, photographic or video images that learners are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
- Students must not record audio, take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking audio, photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances.
- 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 in school.
- Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before video, audio or photographs of students are published on the school website.
- 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. Sharing explicit images/video of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Communications

This is an area of rapidly evolving technologies and uses.

Coláiste Éamonn Rís has, in the past, identified significant issues arising out of uncontrolled mobile phone usage. In addition, we felt that our IT and computer education were below where they should be in our modern IT world.

Consequently, after a wide ranging consultation process involving Students, Parents, Staff and the BOM, it was decided that the use of phones by the Student body would be phased out over the coming years and that personal Student IT Devices would be phased in.

This process began for First Years in 2023 and will be school-wide by 2028.

Inappropriate activities

The following list are deemed “inappropriate activities” in our school.

Students should not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to the following:

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer 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 (eg 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
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

School Website

- 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 website
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of students or staff
- Website using facilities such as comments and user-generated content will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages
- The school website will avoid publishing the first name and last name of individuals in a photograph
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published

Cyberbullying

Bullying is *'unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) which is repeated over time'*. (Anti-Bullying Procedures, Department of Education, 2013)

This definition also includes:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs
- cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person with the intent to hurt, humiliate or intimidate them. Cyberbullying can take many forms including exclusion online, hurtful messages/images, abusive messages/emails, imitating someone online, etc. This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving.

Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedure, 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 behaviour"

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; 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.

Measures are taken 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.

Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school should follow the rules set out in this agreement. They will only use personal devices (smartphone, tablet, smartwatch etc.) in school under the direction and/or supervision of a teacher if they have permission.

AI: Educational Integration and Support:

- The school recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.
- The school provides training and professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively utilise AI tools in their teaching practices, ensuring they stay up to date with technological advancements.
- The selection of AI tools and technologies aligns with educational goals, including supporting learner agency and promoting critical thinking.
- AI technologies are integrated into the curriculum to enhance learner outcomes and experiences.
- The school integrates AI into its educational processes to enhance learning, foster innovation, and promote the development of critical skills.
- The school will make necessary adjustments to our school's adoption and integration of AI based on review and feedback.
- A regular review of the impact of AI on learning outcomes is to be conducted to ensure continuous improvement.

AI. Ethical Use and Data Protection:

- School staff and learners receive training on the ethical use of AI technologies, including understanding data privacy, identifying biases, and verifying AI-generated information.
- All AI tools authorised for use in school comply with data protection regulations.
- Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.
- Learners will not create, share or send any AI generated material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

- Staff and learners must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame learners, their family members, staff, other members of the school community.
- Staff and learners must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring the school into disrepute.

AI: Promotion of Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking:

- The school promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help learners understand AI, its implications, and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information, and recognising potential biases in AI tools. AI systems used in school ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes. Learners must attribute AI text and images properly when used in assignments/homework. Teachers will attribute AI text and images when used.
- AI systems used in the school ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.
- Learners must attribute AI text and images properly when used in assignments/homework.
- Teachers will attribute AI text and images when used.

Learner Use of AI:

- AI Generated material is allowed for the purpose of research, brainstorming, revising text.
- AI Generated material is allowed for certain activities with prior school permission.
- If used for research learners must factcheck, check other sources and reference sources.
- AI Generated material is allowed for assignments/homework if that use is properly documented and credited with an explanation of how the AI tool is used and the extent of its contribution.
- AI generated material is not allowed in place of learner work (homework, assignments, examinations).

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet and digital technologies 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
- Online Safety Framework

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies 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, including An Garda Síochána. These sanctions are laid out in the Code of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) Policy.

Passed by BOM.....14-9-2026

APPENDIX 1:

Permission Form

Please review the attached school Acceptable Use Policy, and sign and return this permission form to the Principal/Year Head/Class Tutor.

Name of Student: _____

Class/Year: _____

Student

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet and digital technologies. I will use the internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the procedures outlined in the policy.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and 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 students access unsuitable websites.

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

. Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Appendix 2:

Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re Safe and Responsible use of the Internet

As part of the school's education programme we offer students supervised access to the Internet. This allows students access to a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance the learning experience.

However, access to and use of the Internet and digital technologies requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy (enclosed). It is important that this enclosed document is read carefully, signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school.

Although the school takes active steps to promote safe use of the Internet, it recognises the possibility that students may accidentally or deliberately access inappropriate or objectionable material.

Having read the terms of our school's Acceptable Use Policy, you may like to take a moment to consider how the Internet is used in your own home, and see if there is any way you could make it safer for your own family.

Parents/Guardians can find a range of advice, support, tools and resources on the Webwise Parents Hub available on **webwise.ie/parents**. On the hub you'll find explainer guides to popular apps, talking points, how to guides, expert advice videos and a free Parents' Guide to a Better Internet.

Yours sincerely,

Mission Statement

to develop responsible individuals who will participate fully in a changing society and
to carry out this task in a Christian environment