

ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

MACROOM, CO. CORK

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The aim of this Internet 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to indicate that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

This version of the AUP was ratified by the Board of Management in March, 2009.

School's Strategy

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

General

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- 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.
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- Students and teachers will 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 memory sticks, CD-ROMs, Digital Cameras or other digital 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.

World Wide Web

- Students will not visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
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- Students will 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.)
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- 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.

Email

- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy 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 whom they know only through e-mail or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Internet Chat/Social Networking

- Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication methods that have been approved by the school.
- Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will be always be supervised.
- Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.

- Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via the Internet chat will be forbidden.

School Website

- Students may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web 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 pupils and staff.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher and one of two personnel dedicated to the position of approval of material on the school website.
- Student's work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website without parental permission. Video clips will be password protected.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will never publish the name of individuals in a photograph without appropriate permission.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use student's names in image filenames or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance text messages, or the unauthorised taking of images with a mobile phone camera, still or moving, is in direct breach of the school's Code of Behaviour. The confiscation of such technology will be imposed and a parent/guardian will have to collect it.

Legislation

The school will make available information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet. Teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with this legislation.

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Bill 1997.
- 1993 Interception Act
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Support Structures

If a student encounters objectionable material on the Internet at school, she should bring it immediately to the attention of her teacher and/or school management.

The school will endeavour to inform parents/guardians of the dangers of internet usage on a regular basis by way of information evenings.

Sanctions

The school authorities will make every effort to monitor the activities of students during class time. If students are found to be in breach of the Acceptable Use Policy – i.e. misuse of the internet – disciplinary action will ensue immediately.

Withdrawal of privileges for one week will be a sanction for the first offence. Notification of this misdemeanour will also be sent to the parents/guardians.

For subsequent offences the Ladder of Sanctions are referenced in the school's Code of Behaviour will be applied.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Advice on Safe Use of the Internet Outside of School

Advice on Internet Safety can be found at: www.webwise.ie

Reporting of illegal content or pornography

Contact the Office of Internet Safety at: www.hotline.ie - a report of the incident can be filled online.

Other methods of Reporting:

phone 1890 610 710
fax 1890 520 720
e-mail report@hotline.ie

**Ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School
March, 2009**