



# St. Joseph's National School Glenealy, Co. Wicklow

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## Internet Acceptable Use Policy

### Introduction:

The internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It provides information and allows people to communicate with others and share information. It can develop children's independent research skills and promote life-long learning. However some material available on the internet is unsuitable for children and therefore St Josephs NS have developed the following policy document to govern use of the internet by students within the school building.

### Aims:

The aim of this acceptable use policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities afforded by the schools internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Therefore this policy sets out what can and cannot be done while using the internet in our school.

### Safeguards:

#### 1) Rules

Perhaps the single most important safeguard implemented by the school for safe internet use is adult supervision. **Children at our school may not use the internet in any capacity unless there is adult supervision in the room.**

There are also several other strict rules which must be followed:

- \* Children may not visit, post on, or send messages from social media websites such as Facebook, TikTok - either on their own page or on the pages of others
- \* Children may not use messaging aps (such as MS Messenger) while online
- \* Children may not access any email accounts they may have while in school and thus may not send or check emails either
- \* Children may not disclose personal information on any site, in any format or in any way
- \* Video sharing sites such as Instagram may not be accessed on school devices however sites such as YouTube are allowed once the teacher has pre-approved the content to be viewed
- \* The internet is considered an education and research tool and thus playing of games is permitted **where those games are clearly educational**. Playing games for entertainment purposes (gaming) is not permitted at any time
- \* Uploading or downloading aps, videos or any other content is not allowed unless the items being uploaded are being added to the school's website

and the children in question have permission to do so and supervision while doing so

In the vast majority of cases children will be allowed visit sites **prescribed by their teacher in advance**. Children are not permitted to simply 'surf' through various internet pages at random even when undertaking research.

#### **2) Firewall:**

The school employs an internet firewall to monitor and filter incoming and outgoing traffic to our network. This provides us with a valuable barrier between our own network and the world wide web.

#### **3) Filters:**

Our PCs, laptops and other devices all employ filtering software. Such software acts to prevent the risk of exposure to harmful and inappropriate material.

#### **4) Other Safeguards:**

Consent for use of the internet inside the school building is given by the parents of each child via an 'Acceptable Internet Usage Form' (see copy below). Once signed and returned to the school this indicates a parent has given permission for the child to use the internet at school but to do so **within the rules set out above**.

Breaches of the rules outlined above will result in a sanction against the child in question. At a minimum this could result in a cessation of use of the internet for that occasion. For a more serious infraction the child's access to the internet may be permanently barred.

#### **5) Mobile Phone Usage**

In accordance with Circular 0044/2025, the use of mobile phones by students within the school grounds is entirely prohibited. It is envisaged this will help create and sustain an environment that encourages traditional face-to-face social interaction and promotes communication skills. It also greatly reduces the risk of digital or online bullying or abuse. In the event that the school receives a specific request from a parent for a pupil to have a phone on their person entering the school, that device will be kept locked in a box for the duration of the day and returned to the student at the end of the day.

#### **6) AI (Artificial Intelligence)**

The use of AI in the school is governed by the same rules as all internet access, most saliently, **it may not be used without adult supervision**. There are contexts in which AI can be employed productively and safely in teaching and learning for example with children's project work. Ensuring that usages are geared towards progressive and beneficial ends and preventing AI from being used as a substitute for traditional, tried and tested pedagogical methodologies or for student research is an important part of our policy.

#### **Support Structures:**

Our school has taken and will continue to take steps to inform both students and

parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal or harmful use of the internet. This information has been made available at parents evenings and/or internet safety talks throughout the year. On occasion these events may feature guest speakers from an *Garda Síochána* and other experts on cybercrime and cyber-bullying.

(consent form below)

### Internet Permission Form

Please complete this form and return to the school principal

Name of pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pupil:**

I agree to comply with the school rules on the use of the internet. I will use the internet in a responsible way and observe all the restrictions explained to me by the school.

**Parent:**

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil, I have read the 'Internet Acceptable Usage' policy and hereby grant permission for my son/daughter to access the internet. I understand that internet access is designed for educational purposes. I also understand that the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites, but that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety.

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Website:**

I understand that, if the school deems it appropriate, my son/daughters school work may be chosen for inclusion on the school's website. Images of my daughter or son may also be published on the school website. No personal information will be included with the images. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published. Please sign to confirm you are aware of and understand this:

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_