Coláiste Mhuire, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Acceptable Use Policy 2023

Introduction

This policy is informed by both the mission statement and the ethos of Coláiste Mhuire which aims to enable students to reach their full potential academically, personally and socially. This policy reflects the caring and pastoral nature of our school. We also understand the policy encompasses the entire school community of students, parents and staff.

Our Aim

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students 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 Therefore, if the school's AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed. It is envisaged that the staff, parent and student representatives will revise the AUP annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

Our Strategy

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet. These are listed below:
- 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.
- 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, or other digital storage media in school is not permitted, students are encouraged to use their Google Drive accounts.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- The school email assigned to every student and staff member is the property of the school and will be suspended and subsequently deleted
  once the student ends their educational journey in Coláiste Mhuire.

Legislation

The school will make available information on the following legislation relating to the use of the internet for teachers, students and parents/guardians should familiarise themselves with:
- Data Protection Act 1988 (and Amendment Act 2003) http://www.dataprotection.ie/
- Data Protection Act 2018 http://www.dataprotection.ie/
- European Communities (Electronic Communications Networks and Services) (Privacy and Electronic Communications) Regulations 2011.S.I.

No. 336/2011 http://www.dataprotection.ie/
- http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1988/en/act/pub/0025/index.html
- http://www.jrjshstatutebook.ie/2003/en /act/pub/0006Lindex.htm I
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
  http://www.irishstatutebook.je/I998/en /act/pub/0022/index.html
- Interception Act 1993
  http:/ /www.irishstatutebookie/ 1993/en/act/pub/00IO/print.html
- Video Recordings Act 1989
  http:/ /www jrishstatutebook.ie/1989/en /act/pub/0022/jndex.htm

Other Policies related to our AUP:
Anti-bullying
Child Safeguarding Statement
Code of Behaviour

World Wide Web

- Students should not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials or attempt to circumvent protective software.
- Students should report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials.
- Students should use the internet for educational purposes only.
- Students should not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students should never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images which are not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's AUP.
- Students should be made 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 and Internet Communication

The school community will not use email for personal reasons.

- The school community should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, pupils should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Email which is used for educational purposes should use approved email addresses and will be supervised or authorised by a teacher.
- When using email for school reasons the school community is asked to respect boundaries in relation to time of the day when sending emails to staff and/or students.

- Members of the school community should not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene and/or defamatory[1], or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Members of the school community should not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers, pictures, usernames or passwords.
- Members of the school community should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or other online communication.
- Internet chat/social networking sites: students should only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other forms of electronic communication that have been approved by the school.
- Where appropriate, usernames should be used to avoid disclosure of identity.

Continuity of Education/Distance Learning

- Where the need arises, the school will endeavour to maintain teaching, learning and assessment through distance learning.
- Digital platforms chosen by the school, namely Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom and/or others can be used by teachers and students to continue engagement. This list is not exhaustive. As secure and educationally valuable programmes develop, teachers and students are encouraged to make use of such programmes.
- Teachers and students are encouraged to set up these platforms and digital spaces in 1st year.
- It is envisaged that all students will participate to the best of their ability within these online platforms. Where a student encounters difficulties they should aim to communicate this to the school through the many channels available to them.
- Students are encouraged to participate online in a safe, respectful and friendly manner which upholds their digital citizenship pledge.
- The school will aim to provide guidance to parents where appropriate in relation to students' online experiences and safety.

Protocols for video conferencing

General guidelines for video calling

Ensure that the background visible for the video call is appropriate and does not contain personal aspects. Anything unsuitable should be removed from the background setting for both teachers and pupils/students when calls are taking place for both parties. Blurring functionality and the use of a static image are features of some of these tools.

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[1]**Defamation- also called calumny, vilification, traducement, slander(for transitory statements) and libel (for written,broadcast, or otherwise published words - is the communication of a statement that makes a claim, expressly stated or implied to be factual, that may give an individual, business, product, group, government, or nation a negative or inferior image.**

The teacher should always invite the students to the call and act as hosts/disable co-host function.

The teacher is always first in the room (deploy waiting room where possible) and the last to leave the online meeting to ensure that students cannot rejoin the room afterwards. Maintain a log of calls and a record of attendance as you would do in general practice.

General guidelines for live video lessons:

The *video* conference room is a classroom and the same school behaviour and codes of conduct apply to this environment.

Agree protocols in advance with your students, e.g. using the chat feature for questions, raising hands if they wish to ask a question, asking students to mute microphones at the beginning of a lesson in order to improve sound quality. This list is not exhaustive and will vary depending on the tool being used and the age of the students.

The teacher always invites the students to the call and acts as host. If a co-host function is available on the chosen platform, this should be disabled for students. It is good practice from a safeguarding and operational perspective to have a second staff member on the video call.

Students must use their school email and identify themselves clearly. The student will not be admitted if their identification is unclear.

Teachers must turn on necessary security settings before allowing students to join the call e.g. chat feature, waiting room, etc. where applicable.

Pre-set the video meeting to mute participants' microphone automatically upon entry (if possible). You can choose to switch them on selectively to allow student participation.

The chat feature can be used by students to ask questions and by teachers to share links with students.

It is crucial that the teacher is always the last to leave the online meeting room to ensure that students cannot rejoin the room afterwards.

Maintain a log of calls and a record of attendance as you would do in general practice.

Students must not record the lesson or any online activities on a separate device.

Using video calls/video conferencing in the post primary classroom

As students may not be able to attend live classes due to lack of devices in the home setting, teachers may instead choose to record their class/screencast a lesson and share it with students using the chosen school platform or via an email link.

School Website

- The website will be moderated to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of students or staff.
- The school will endeavour to focus on group activities when using digital photographs, audio or video clips. Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website without parental consent.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.

Student Personal Devices

This section refers to personal devices such as: iPods, tablets, cameras, dictaphones, game consoles, PSPs, smart watches etc.

Teachers may encourage the appropriate use of devices in pursuit of learning. in classrooms and other learning settings. Staff will make clear to pupils when this is appropriate and students will be given clear guidance on the use of mobile phones/devices in a learning setting.

- Students' personal devices, unless authorised by a teacher, are not to be used on school premises.
- Each student must ensure all their devices are SWITCHED OFF in the school building.
- Note: Devices in 'Silent' or 'Vibrate' mode are not considered 'off'.
- The unauthorised capture of images, video or audio is in direct breach of the school's AUP.
- Connecting or attempting to connect to the school's network system (wired or wireless) without authorisation is in direct breach of the school's AUP.

- Students are reminded that the use of mobile phones is never permitted on the school premises.
- Students are reminded that mobile phones are not allowed in State Examinations and they should mirror this behaviour during in-house exams and mocks.

Use of Photographs, Videos and Images

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to learning, allowing staff and students to have instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the internet. However, staff, parents/guardians and students need to be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the internet. Such images may provide opportunities for harassment or breaches of privacy to take place. Digital images may remain available on the internet forever and may cause harm to individuals in the short or long term. Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

At Coláiste Mhuire students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

- This policy will apply in conjunction with Coláiste Mhuire's Anti-Bullying Policy which may be used to determine whether further intervention or sanction is required.
- Taking photos or videos on the premises of Coláiste Mhuire or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.
- Students must not share 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 and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Social Media

The aims set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of students andcstaff and the reputation of the school is protected. This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Facebook), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chat rooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as Pinboard and content sharing sites such as Flickr/Pinterest and YouTube. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media. The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services by the whole school community of Coláiste Mhuire:

- The school community must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, staff, their family members, other members of the community related to Coláiste Mhuire.
- The school community must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of Coláiste Mhuire on social media.
- The school community must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- The school community must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Coláiste Mhuire into disrepute.
- The school community must not represent their personal views as the views of Coláiste Mhuire on any social medium.

Sanctions

Misuse of ICT and internet resources both on and off the school premises may 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.

MY DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP PLEDGE

Respect Yourself

I will show respect for myself through my actions. I will only use appropriate language and images on the internet or on the school website /virtual learning environment. I will not post inappropriate personal information about my life, experiences or relationships.

Protect Yourself

I will ensure that the information I post online will not put me at risk. I will not publish full contact details, a schedule of my activities or inappropriate personal details in public spaces. I will report any aggressive or inappropriate behaviour directed at me. I will not share my password or account details with anyone else.

Respect Others

I will show respect to others. I will not use electronic mediums to bully, harass, isolate or stalk other people. I will not visit sites that are degrading, pornographic, racist or that the school would deem inappropriate. I will not abuse my access privileges and I will not enter other people's private spaces or work areas. I will respect my peers and teachers by not using technology inappropriately in or out of class.

Protect Others

I will protect others by reporting abuse. I will not forward or disseminate any materials (including emails and images) that are harmful to others and that the school would deem inappropriate.

Respect Copyright

I will respect the ideas and writings of others and will not plagiarise works found on the internet. I will acknowledge all sources including images. I will not download or install software on school machines without permission. I will not steal music or other media and will refrain from distributing these in a manner that violates their licenses.

Respect Technology

I will take all reasonable precautions to protect ICT equipment from damage. I will not tamper with its software or jailbreak[2] it. I will not interfere with school ICT systems or attempt to bypass school restrictions.

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[2] To Install unapproved software or applications.

Respecting and Protecting the School Community

Open internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher and the school will monitor ICT and internet usage. Students should not seek to access unsupervised ICT.

All students of the school will be required to sign a Digital Citizenship and User Acceptance Policy Form. The student Digital Citizenship Pledge will be on prominent display in all rooms with ICT equipment and in other appropriate places around the school premises. Content and images which reference students will only be published on the school website, social media accounts and print media with the permission of parents/guardians. Parental Consent will be sought as part of the User Acceptance Policy form.

Colaiste Mhuire User Acceptance Form for Acceptable Use of I.C.T Policy

Name of student:

Address:

Class:

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.

Student's signature:

Date:

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son 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 students access unsuitable websites.

I accept the above paragraph: Yes/ No (Please circle as appropriate)

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

I accept the above paragraph: Yes/ No (Please circle as appropriate)

Parent/Guardian signature:

Date:

Coláiste Mhuire
An Muileann gCearr

Acceptable Use Policy

The Board of Management formally adopted this policy on the 4th. May 2023.

Signed: _____

Ms. Moira Mahon

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____