



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP POLICY

DECEMBER 2025

St. Brendan's Community School

St. Brendan's Community School Mission Statement

"Our aim is to create a caring community of learning where each individual is valued as a unique human being."

General Approach

The aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students will benefit from the 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. If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To always treat others with respect.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Brendan's Community School.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St. Brendan's Community School.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

St. Brendan's Community School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases St. Brendan's Community School will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

St. Brendan's Community School implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Students will be provided with education in internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curriculum.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to students in St. Brendan's Community School through our [INDUCTION, PASTORAL CARE, ICT, PEER MENTORING programs].
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- St. Brendan's Community School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

- Board of Management, teaching staff, support staff, students and parents

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, students, parents/carers, and representatives of the Board of Management.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Surveys and/or questionnaires of students, parents and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, John Kennedy should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by ICT Committee.

Content Filtering

St. Brendan's Community School has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

- **Level 1:** This content filtering level allows access to a specific list of educational and related websites and other websites commonly used by schools. Level 1 is used by a very small number of schools, as it is generally perceived as being a little too restrictive by most schools.

Students taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

Web Browsing and Downloading

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher.
- Students and staff will not copy information from the internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content.

- Students and staff 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.

- Students will use the school's internet connection only for educational and career development activities.

- Students will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.

- Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
 - Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.
 - Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

Email and Messaging

- The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at St. Brendan's Community School.
- Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other students.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
- Students will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students should be aware that email communications are monitored.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not use of school email accounts or personal emails.
- Students should immediately 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 avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.

Social Media

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in St. Brendan's Community School:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, G Chat etc. is not allowed in St. Brendan's Community School.
- Use of blogs such as Word Press, Tumblr etc. is allowed at certain times in St. Brendan's Community School.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.
- Staff and students must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, staff, other members of the St. Brendan's Community School community
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of the St. Brendan's Community 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 St. Brendan's Community School into disrepute.
- Staff and students must not represent your personal views as those of bring St. Brendan's Community School on any social medium.

Personal Devices & Yondr Pouches

St. Brendan's Community School is a mobile phone and smart watch free school during the school day.

- Students who bring personal devices must store them in their assigned Yondr pouch, which remains locked throughout the school day unless staff grant permission for supervised use.
- Unlocking stations are available at the end of the school day, and devices may only be accessed earlier with staff approval (e.g., medical needs, early sign-out).
- Students are expected to respect the integrity of the Yondr pouch system. Any attempt to tamper with or misuse pouches is a breach of Digital Citizenship expectations.

Responsible Use of Technology

- Devices may only be used for educational purposes when explicitly permitted by teaching staff.
- Students must recognise that responsible digital citizenship includes knowing when *not* to use technology, and respecting the school's mobile-free environment as part of creating a caring community of learning.

- The school promotes mindful device use beyond the school day, encouraging students to balance screen time with healthy sleep, socialisation, and wellbeing.

Images & Video

- 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 St. Brendan's Community School students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances.
- 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 students of St. Brendan's Community School.
- 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 photographs of students are published on the school website.
- 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. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Cyberbullying

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected to always treat others with respect.

Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another pupil 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 cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.

Measures are taken by St. Brendan's Community School 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 cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

School Websites

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork 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, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.

The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.


St. Brendan's Community School I will use only digital photographs, audio, or video clips of 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 not be published on St. Brendan's Community School web pages.

The St. Brendan's Community School will avoid publishing the first name and last name of students in video or photograph captions published online.

Ratification, Implementation and Review

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11/12/25
- This policy has been made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. It is also published on the School Website and the School App. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron upon request.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every two years. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to School Personnel and the Parents' Association. The review will also be published on the School Website and the School App. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: 
Joan Hogan
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 
John Kennedy
Principal/Secretary of Board of Management

Date: 11/12/25

Date: 11/12/25

Date of next review: _____

Appendices

Permission Form

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

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: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

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 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 students access unsuitable websites.

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. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing students' work on the school website.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy, and sign and return this permission form to the Principal.

School Name: Name of Student: _____

Class/Year: _____

Student: _____

My Digital Citizen 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 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 I 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 it. I will not interfere with school ICT systems or attempt to bypass school restrictions.

St. Brendan's Community School Digital Citizen & Acceptable Use Policy Student and Parent / Guardian Acceptance Form.

Please review the above pledge in conjunction with the full policy document, available in the parent's handbook and on the school website, with your child and then sign.

Student Acceptance:

Name of Student (Print Name) _____ Year _____
Class _____

I agree to uphold the Digital Citizenship Pledge and always act in a manner that is respectful to myself and others, in a way that will present the school in apposite way. I accept that this policy applies in school and outside school. I understand that failing to follow the above will lead to appropriate sanctions being carried out.

Student Signature _____ Date: ___/___/_____ Parent /
Guardian Acceptance

As parent or legal guardian of the above-named student, I have read and understood the Digital Citizen Pledge and Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for the student to access the school's ICT systems for teaching and learning purposes.

I understand that the 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 and accept that the student has a personal responsibility with respect to appropriate behaviour and will be held accountable for any misuse of technology. Please tick as appropriate:

I accept the above paragraph I do not accept the above paragraph

Parent/ Guardian _____ Date: ___/___/_____ School Website & School
Social Media

In relation to the school app/website, social and print media platforms, I hereby grant permission to St. Brendan's Community School to publish content and photographs which refers to/names/includes my child if the school considers it appropriate.

Parent/ Guardian _____ Date: ___/___/_____

I accept that should I withhold permission, there will be an onus on my child to inform individual staff members as the need arises, that they do not have parental consent to publish content and images.

References

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Appendix 1 – DES vision for ICT integration in Irish schools

The Department’s vision for ICT integration in Irish schools is to:

Realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance teaching, learning and assessment so that Ireland’s young people become engaged thinkers, active learners, knowledge constructors and global citizens to participate fully in society and the economy

To achieve this, our schools have a major role in ensuring that our students have the opportunity to develop a range of key skills throughout their primary and post-primary school journey. We must ensure, that of the end of the SeniorCycle, students have acquired these key skills and a sound base of ICT competencies that will support their learning on transition to further or higher education.

The Department recognises that all of the education partners - teachers, management bodies, teacher unions, parent associations, Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers, Higher Education (HE) Institutes Further Education (FE) and Training – also have a major role to play in achieving this vision.

| Objective | Action(s) | Timeframe | Lead Partner(s) |
|--|--|-----------|-----------------|
| 3.5 To promote responsible and ethical use of the internet and related technologies. | - Undertake awareness-raising actions and programmes that promote responsible and ethical use of the internet in close cooperation with all relevant actors at European, regional and local levels. | 2015-2020 | PDST-TIE |
| | - Provide parents/guardians, students and teachers with information, advice and tools to promote safer, more responsible and more effective use of the internet. | 2015-2020 | PDST-TIE |
| | - Develop additional learning resources for teachers to integrate cyber-bullying awareness and prevention into each school’s provision for Wellbeing including its curriculum programme for Social, Personal and Health, Education (SPHE). | 2015-2020 | PDST/PDST-TIE |

Figure 1 – DES LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH AND POLICY - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Appendix 2 - Junior Cycle Digital Key Skills

Managing Myself (Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning)

- use different technologies to plan, manage and engage in my learning
- express, share and present opinions through the use of digital technology

Staying Well (Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology)

- identify situations where my personal safety and wellbeing, and that of others, is put at risk by digital technology and know how to cope
- respect the rights and responsibilities of others in using digital technology
- protect my personal privacy online

Managing Information and Thinking (Using digital technology to access, manage and share content)

- source, share and evaluate information that I find in different technologies and digital media formats
- use digital tools to expand my thinking and source information
- understand how to use content and present it differently while respecting copyright • use different technologies and digital media tools to give and receive feedback

Being Creative (Stimulating creativity using digital technology)

- be innovative and creative in using digital technology to learn, think and express myself
- explore the possibilities of mixing different technologies and digital media to help me reflect, problem solve and present ideas
- create digital media objects which demonstrate creativity and imagination to present learning

Working with others (Working with others through digital technology)

- demonstrate collaborative learning using digital technology
- use digital technology to participate in collaborative learning and communication spaces respect the rights and feelings of others when using digital media

Communicating (Using digital technology to communicate)

- use digital technology creatively to present, interact with and share ideas for different audiences
- make decisions about how best to communicate for particular purposes
- be respectful and responsible in my digital and online communications

Revised Digital Citizenship and Acceptable Use Policy

1. Policy Objectives

This policy aims to empower students to exercise democratic rights online, promote ethical and inclusive digital participation, and encourage critical engagement with digital media.

2. Curriculum Integration

Digital citizenship education is integrated into SPHE and CSPE curricula, including modules on online wellbeing, cyberbullying, disinformation, and digital resilience. Webwise resources such as 'Connected', 'Be in Ctrl', and 'Lockers' are used to support learning.

3. Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

The AUP follows the Webwise Ireland 12-step structure and includes student voice and parental engagement. It is dynamically updated using the Webwise AUP Generator.

4. Cyberbullying and Online Safety

The policy aligns with Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and includes clear reporting pathways, support services (e.g., Childline, Hotline.ie), and restorative practices.

5. Digital Wellbeing and Mental Health

Guidance is provided on screen time, social media pressures, and online identity. Lessons such as 'The Full Picture' from Webwise are incorporated.

6. EU Rights and Responsibilities

Students are educated on EU digital rights, GDPR, and Coco's Law. The policy promotes student agency and responsible digital behavior.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy includes metrics aligned with the Digital Education Action Plan, including student digital skills surveys, teacher CPD tracking, and parent feedback loops.

