

Church Hill NS (05927L)

# Acceptable Use Policy

Created: 2023

Reviewed: January 2026

# **Acceptable Use Policy**

## **General Approach**

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.

## **Internet Use**

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

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- 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.

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:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Church Hill National 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.

Church Hill National School implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Church Hill National School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer and more effective use of the internet.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by teachers, staff and Board of management.

### **General Internet Use**

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- 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.
- 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 never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- 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 and Messaging**

- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.
- The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Church Hill National School. Students in 4th, 5th & 6th classes will receive Church Hill email addresses. The email function is deactivated.

- Students who avail of Assistive Technology will be supplied with email addresses if the need requires.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

### **Aladdin**

- Aladdin is a communication tool used by Irish schools to securely communicate with parents/guardians.
- All information will be updated every summer by the school secretaries. Information relating to past pupils will be archived.

### **IPADS**

- IPAD sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Before using the devices above, each class teacher will remind the class of the rules before using them. Pupils not following instructions will follow sanctions – *see sanctions section*.
- Use of the camera function for taking photographs/audio clips/video clips of students or teachers without their knowledge will not be allowed. A teacher must give permission and clear direction before this happens.
- Children will not be allowed to change or alter the background screensavers.
- Devices must be returned to trolleys appropriately and connected for charging purposes.
- Teachers must check that all plugs and chargers are present before and after sessions and if not, report to the I.T coordinator.

### **Mobile Phones**

- In line with Circular 0044/2025 from the Department of Education and Youth, Church Hill NS is a mobile phone-free & social media free school for students.
- Students are not permitted to bring phones to school.

- If pupils need to contact home, they can do so via the school office.
- **Medical Exceptions:** Students who require a smart device or similar equipment for medical purposes must submit relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's note) to the school's principal for approval.

### **Use of Mobile Phones by Teachers and Staff in the Presence of Pupils**

- Teachers and all members of staff will refrain from using personal mobile phones in front of children during the school day.
- Mobile phones should be kept out of sight and on silent mode while staff are engaged in teaching, supervision, meetings or any activity involving pupils.
- The use of a phone in the presence of pupils is permitted **only in an emergency situation.**
- Where an emergency call or message must be made, the staff member will, where possible, step away from pupils.
- Staff may use mobile phones for approved school purposes (e.g., school authentication apps, roll books, educational applications) only when this has been authorised by the Principal and is not disruptive to pupils.

This approach models appropriate behaviour for pupils and supports a focused, safe learning environment in keeping with the ethos of Church Hill NS.

### **Photographs/Video Clips of Pupils**

- Photographs/videos may be taken of pupils participating in Sports Days, school trips, concerts, class activities etc.
- Photographs and /or videos may be posted on the school's website, Twitter or Facebook accounts, and relevant class digital platforms such as SeeSaw with the signed permission of a parent/guardian.

### **School Website** ([www.churchhillns.ie](http://www.churchhillns.ie))

- The website will be regularly checked by the ICT coordinator and principal on a monthly basis to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety or personal information of pupils or staff.
- Staff will be encouraged to add content to the school website on a regular basis.
- 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.

- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Church Hill National School web pages.

### **Personal Devices**

- ALL personal devices that have the capability of taking photographs or recording video or audio, such as phones, IPADS, android tablets, MP3 players, smart watches and any other items not listed here but with the capabilities, are forbidden within the school grounds at all times.
- Kindles are not permitted in school.
- Neither the school nor the class teacher will be held liable for any damage or loss on school property.

### **Cyberbullying**

- The children will be reminded that Cyberbullying is *'the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature'*
- Examples of cyberbullying include (but are not limited to):
  - Abusive messages or slagging on any social media site
  - Offensive comments on videos or posts
  - Spreading rumours online
  - Hacking into your online accounts
  - Posting offensive images
- Cyberbullying will be covered on a bi-annual basis under the SPHE Stay Safe Programme.
- In order to protect themselves on teachers will remind children to:
  - Choose strong passwords and never share them with friends
  - Consider that any information you share online can be copied and shared with a wider audience.
  - Be polite to others online
  - Remember that posts and messages can never be permanently deleted.
- Children will also be taught what to do if they think they are being cyberbullied:
  - Tell an adult you trust.
  - Do not reply to any unkind messages online.
  - Block and report to someone who writes unkind messages.
  - Go offline.
  - Change your username, password, email address, mobile number if necessary.
  - Inform the Internet Service Provider and the Gardaí if necessary.
  - Keep a record of any nasty communication online.
- Any child found to be bullying of any form, including cyberbullying, will face serious sanctions. This will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

### **Social Media and Messaging services**

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Church Hill National School:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook Messenger etc. is not allowed in Church Hill National School.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.
- 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 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 Church Hill National School into disrepute.
- Our school/classes use Twitter and Facebook as mediums to communicate our pupils' activities. From time to time, this may also include 'retweets or likes' of interesting facts from carefully selected websites.
- **Retweets are at no time an endorsement by Church Hill NS.**
- Tweets and Facebook posts will be continuously monitored to ensure that there is no content that could compromise the safety or personal information of pupils or staff.
- No copyrighted material will be uploaded or tweeted through our accounts without crediting the source of such material.

### Seesaw

- Pupils are engaged in the learning platform of Seesaw from junior infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class with permission from their parents. Once permission is given for a pupil, teachers DO NOT have to seek permission each year.
- It will be used for interaction between teacher and pupil, sharing and distributing of work. It can also be used for notifications and updates of class events.
- It can also be used for distance learning as a means to upload lessons, videos, activities etc. It can also be used for children to upload photos of their work, responses to assignments etc.
- Only teachers working with this class can view work and photos and the teacher controls what work is displayed to others.
- Teachers will archive work in June of each year so new teachers don't have to access to work and comments from previous years. They will also add the new class teacher and delete themselves from the account if necessary.

### Distance Learning: Zoom Calls

In order to create a safe environment for pupils and staff when taking part in Zoom sessions, the following considerations must be observed.

#### For Parents/Guardians

1. By accepting the Zoom meeting ID and allow in your child to join the meeting, you agree to the terms set out in this document.
2. Zoom is only to be accessed by a device in a communal family space. Parents/Guardians need to monitor their child's participation.
3. All attendees should be dressed appropriately
4. The meeting ID is to remain confidential and not to be shared to anyone that it was not designated to.
5. Recording, photos or screenshots of the Zoom meeting are not allowed by any participants.
6. The Zoom may be locked by the teachers 5 minutes after the start time so that it can only be accessed by authorised participants.
7. For participants some Zoom facilities will be disabled by the host teacher.
8. Lastly, the same behavioral expectations that are set within a classroom apply to the Zoom meeting and the teacher retains the right to terminate a pupil's participation.

#### For pupils attending a Zoom meeting the following rules apply:

1. Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
2. Remember our schools rules – they are still in place, even online.
3. Set up your device with no distractions in the background.
4. Join the video with your microphone muted.
5. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class. Wait until the teacher calls you to share.
6. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would in class. Wait until the teacher calls you to share.
7. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
8. Be on time – set a reminder if it helps.

#### **Class WhatsApp Group**

- Parents' WhatsApp groups are not the responsibility of Church Hill NS. It is also advised that parents show good example to their children by using this forum not to complain about the school or class teacher. We advise that parents contact the school or teacher directly if they are unhappy for any reason.

#### **Sanctions**

- Misuse of the internet and/or any the ICT equipment/resources in our school or failure to follow the expected behavior laid out in this AUP may result in disciplinary action.
- Sanctions include, but are not limited to:
  - Written warnings home
  - Withdraw of Digital Technology privileges
  - Confiscation of digital equipment
  - Face-to-face meetings with parents

- Referral to the school principal
- More serious offences, such as cyberbullying will result in more serious sanctions.

**Review**

The policy will be reviewed during the school year *2028-2029* or earlier should changes in legislation or practice dictate otherwise.

**Ratification**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_ Principal