



Acceptable Usage Policy

Introduction

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources, and will be protected from harmful and illegal use of the Internet. 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 If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Smart Phone and Electronic Device policy, the Child Safeguarding statement and the Anti- Bullying policy.

Sanctions

If a pupil deliberately misuses the internet or email, this will result in disciplinary action, including the withdrawal of access privileges. Parents/guardians will receive written notification of misuse by a pupil. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Conditions of Internet Use in Gaelscoil na Mara;

1. Internet will be used for educational purposes only
2. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher
3. Pupils will seek permission before entering any Internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher
4. Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials
5. Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher
6. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
7. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage
8. Pupils will receive training in the area of internet safety
9. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites

10. Pupils will not upload, download or view any material that is illegal, obscene and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
11. Pupils may upload or download material pertaining to their studies under the supervision and direction of the teacher
12. Pupils and staff must not share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community or identify another member(s) of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside
13. Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of pupils and/ or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved
14. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis
15. The use of personal external storage devices in school requires a teacher's permission
16. Pupils will observe good "netiquette" (etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring a school into disrepute
17. 'YouTube' (and similar sites) can be accessed only under the supervision and direction of the teacher

Internet Chat and Instant Messaging

Students are not permitted to use internet chat rooms, instant messaging applications during school hours or on the school premises.

Email

The use of personal email accounts by pupils is not allowed at Gaelscoil na Mara, however class email accounts may be used only under supervision by or permission from a teacher. Class email accounts must not be used to register for any online services such as social networking services, apps and games. Sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from the class teacher and all email communications will be monitored. Pupils must not share any personal details or give details of others over email and must never arrange to meet someone via school email.

Pupils should immediately report receiving any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable and/or is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication. Families will be contacted when staff members receive a report of communication of this nature.

Social Media

Staff, pupils and parents/ guardians of children at Gaelscoil na Mara must not;

- use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame their family members, staff or any other member of the school community

- engage in activities involving social media which might bring staff and pupils of Gaelscoil na Mara into disrepute
- Represent personal views as those which are held by Gaelscoil na Mara on any social medium

Parents are reminded that videos of school performances/ events/ concerts/ shows etc should not be shared on social media sites and that the school will make such videos available where possible through private links for downloading purposes.

Social media is not an acceptable platform on which to air grievances about school matters. The only acceptable way in which to discuss concerns with school staff is to arrange a meeting at an agreed time with the relevant staff member.

Personal Devices

Pupils using their own technology in school must follow the rules and expectations set out in this policy in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

Cyberbullying

When using the internet pupils, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times. 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 by Gaelscoil na Mara to ensure that staff and pupils 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.

School Website

Designated persons will manage the publication of material on the school website.

- Personal pupil information, home addresses and contact details will not be published on the school website
- Class lists will not be published
- Pupils' full names will not be published beside their photograph
- Digital photographs, video clips and audio clips will focus on groups and group activities rather than on individual pupils
- Pupils will be given an opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website
- Teachers will select work to be published and decide on the appropriateness of such
- Permission to publish a student's work will be sought from pupils/ parents/ guardians. This permission may be withdrawn at any time.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Education

Gaelscoil na Mara will undertake an education programme to educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet. 21st century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become internet wise. As children spend more time at home than they do at school and may have more time to engage in internet use, it is necessary that parents/ guardians also educate their children on acceptable internet use as this is not an exclusive responsibility of the school.

Resources that may be used to implement this programme include:

- NCTE Internet Safety Awareness Video
- Use of the ‘Kids’ section on the www.webwise.ie website
- SAFT Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme and exemplars

Filtering

‘Filtering’ is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance. Many browsers have their own built-in filtering tool e.g. Google. Gaelscoil na Mara has chosen to implement the following levels on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network: (See Appendix 4 for more information on the different categories.)

Staff Computers:

Level 6: This level allows access to the same websites as Level 5, but allows access to websites categorised as Social Networking such as Facebook.

School iPads:

Level 4: Allows access to millions of websites, including games and YouTube. However, it blocks sites that fall into the “personal sites” category and sites like Facebook, which fall into the “Social Networks” category.

Pupils 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.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Note to parents
- Appendix 2: Student Undertaking
- Appendix 3: Internet and School Website Permission Form
- Appendix 4: Filtering levels information

Implementation and review

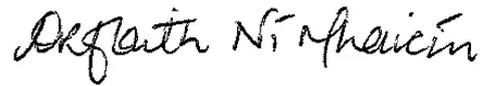
This policy was ratified in 2025 and implemented immediately. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management, teaching staff and parents every three years or as is necessary.

SÍNITHE



Cathaoirleach

Dáta: 26/02/2025



Príomhoide

Appendix 1: Note to parents

A thuismitheoirí dhíl,

At Gaelscoil na Mara we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. This will allow pupils vast educational opportunities by helping them locate material for projects, communicate with students from different cultures, become independent in controlling their own research and become independent learners.

*While we recognise the value of the Internet as a resource, we must also acknowledge the potential risks to students. We feel that the answer is not to ban the use of the Internet in school but to teach pupils to recognise the risks and to become **Internet Wise**. We also allow limited access to 'YouTube' on a strictly supervised basis. This is to allow access to a huge range of educational material. The filter to prevent access to unsuitable material on YouTube is also in operation.*

The process of educating your child(ren) about acceptable internet use is a joint process between home and school and for this reason we have compiled a school policy on Internet safety. Parents must also set and convey acceptable standards of internet usage to their children.

We ask that together with your child(ren) you read the school's Acceptable Use policy and sign the documents attached. Parents should discuss this document with their child(ren) to ensure that they clearly understand the school rules with regard to Internet usage.

Is mise le meas,

**Orflaith Ní Mhaicín,
Príomhoide**



Márta 2025

Appendix 2: Student Undertaking

Bainim úsáid as ríomhairí, giúirléidí leictreonach agus nasc idirlíne na scoile ar mhaithe le foghlaim. Tuigim go mbíonn coinníollacha ag baint le húsáid na rudaí seo agus an nasc idirlíne ar mhaithe le cothrom na féinne a léiriú ar dhaoine eile agus ar mhaithe le sábháilteacht gach duine.

I use computers, electronic devices and the school's internet connection for learning. I understand that certain conditions relate to the use of these things and the internet connection in order to be fair to everyone and for everyone's safety.

Mar sin / Therefore:

- **Iarrfar cead sula dtéim isteach chuig suíomh idirlín ach má tá an suíomh sin ceadaithe ag an múinteoir cheana féin**
- **Ní thabharfaidh mé níthe stórais seachtrach cosúil le bátaí cuimhneacháin nó USBs ar scoil gan cead**
- **Ní bhainfidh mé úsáid as ríomhphost ar mhaithe le cúiseanna pearsanta**
- **Beidh teachtaireachtaí béasach agus ciallmhara á sheoladh agam**
- **Agus ríomhphost á sheoladh agam, ní thabharfaidh mé mo sheoladh baile nó m'uimhir gúthán amach nó ní dhéanfaidh mé socrúithe le bualadh le duine éigin**
- **Iarrfar cead sula n-oscláim ríomhphost nó ceagaltán ar ríomhphost**
- **Ní bhainfidh mé úsáid as seomraí comhrá idirlíne nó aipeanna teachtaireachtaí reatha**
- **Má fheicim aon rud nach bhfuil mé sásta leis nó má fhaighim teachtaireacht nach maith liom, dearfaidh mé é le múinteoir láithreach bonn**
- **Tá a fhios agam go ndéanfaidh an scoil seic ar m'fillteáin ríomhaire agus go mbeidh siad ag breathnú ar na suíomhanna a thugaim cuairt orthu**
- **Tá a fhios agam má bhrisim na rialacha seo d'aonturas, go gcuirfear cosc úsáid na an idirlín orm agus go gcuirfear mo thuismitheoirí ar an eolas faoi**

I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site

I will not bring external storage devices such as pen drives (or memory sticks/USB keys etc.) into school without permission

I will not use email for personal reasons

The messages I send will be polite and sensible

When sending e-mail, I will not give my home address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone

I will not use internet chat rooms

If I see anything I am unhappy with or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately

I know that the school will check my computer files and will monitor the sites I visit

I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed

**Sínithe ag an dalta /
Signed by pupil:**

**Sínithe ag tuismitheoir / caomhnóir / Signed by
parent / guardian:**

Dáta / Date:

Appendix 3: Foirm Ceadaithe Idirlíne agus suíomh idirlíne

Internet and School Website Permission Form

Ainm an pháiste/ Child's name: _____
Rang / Class: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above child(ren), I have read the Internet Acceptable Usage policy of Gaelscoil na Mara and agree to the following in respect of internet use in the school;

- I understand that school internet usage is for educational purposes only and that every reasonable precaution will be taken by the school to provide for online safety
- I accept my own responsibility for the education of my child(ren) on issues of Internet Responsibility and Safety
- I understand that having adhered to all the enclosed precautions the school cannot be held responsible if my child tries to access unsuitable material

Síniú Tuismitheora/Caomhnóra

Parent / Guardian signature: _____

Dáta / Date: _____

Suíomh idirlín / School website

I understand that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's school work may be chosen for inclusion on the school's website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Usage Policy in relation to publishing pupils' work and photographs of school activities on the website.

Síniú Tuismitheora/Caomhnóra

Parent / Guardian signature: _____

Dáta / Date: _____

Appendix 4: Information on the different levels of filtering

Content Filtering Levels

Level 1: This level is the same as Level 2 but blocks websites belonging to the Internet Communications, Online Storage and Streaming Media categories.

Level 2: This level is the same as Level 3 but blocks websites belonging to the Games category.

Level 3 This level gives access to millions of websites including games but blocks 'YouTube' and websites that are categorized as Personal such as blogs and Social Networking such as Flickr and Facebook.

Level 4 This level allows access to the same websites as Level 3, but also allows access to 'YouTube'.

Level 5 This level allows access to the same websites as Level 4, but also allows access to websites that are categorized as Personal such as blogs.

Level 6 This level allows access to the same websites as Level 5, but also allows access to websites that are categorized as Social Networking such as Facebook.

All Filtering Levels are designed to block content of an illegal or pornographic nature.