Acceptable Usage Policy

Athlone Community College is a school under the trusteeship of Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB). Our mission statement sets out that '*Athlone Community College with the co-operation with its educational partners will continue to provide an environment where each student is cherished equally and is nurture to personal, intellectual and moral maturity'* We are an inclusive school both in our intake and in the curriculum which we provide and *'we are committed to creating an atmosphere of excellence in learning, challenging the pupils to reach their full potential'*.

Rationale

The aim of this policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by Athlone Community College's digital learning resources in a safe and effective manner and become responsible users of digital technology. Office365, ICT resources and access to the Internet supports teaching and learning in our school. The use of the technology resources is a privilege and comes with rights and responsibilities for all users. This policy is intended to give guidance and direction for the acceptable use of ICT as appropriate for all members of the school community who have access to, and who are users, of ICT in Athlone Community College.

This policy must be read in conjunction with all other school policies including;

- GDPR Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

Acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour implies acceptance of this Policy.

This policy applies regardless of whether teaching & learning is taking place in school or in another environment.

This policy applies to the use of students' own equipment and school equipment or resources.

Legislation

The following pieces of legislation have relevance to Internet safety.

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

Support Structures

Athlone Community College will endeavour to pass on to students and parents information on key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

In order to provide a safe effective classroom and online environment the following provisions will apply.

- Students will be provided with education in internet safety as part of our implementation of ICT, SPHE and CSPE curricula and through various other educational programmes such as Safer Internet Day.
- Implementing content filtering supported by PDST Technology in Education.
- Providing access to high quality equipment and training to staff to support teaching and learning.
- Providing support and instruction to students in the correct and appropriate use of digital learning equipment.

Digital Citizenship

Digital citizenship is having the ability to positively and actively engage in society through the use of digital technology. Digital citizenship is about how you think, what you experience, and how you behave online. It includes developing the knowledge to think critically, to be safe with your information and who you connect with, and to act responsibly in how you communicate and behave.

Actions to be a good digital citizen include:

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 any materials (including emails and images) that the school would deem inappropriate.

Respect Copyright
I will use and abide by the fair use rules. I will not 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.

Respecting Technology
I will take all reasonable precautions to protect my mobile device from damage. I will always keep it with me or in secure storage when appropriate. I will not tamper with its software or jailbreak it. I will not interfere with school ICT systems or attempt to bypass school restrictions.

Acceptable Use

- All users must:
  - use the school's internet connection only for educational and career development activities
  - not take steps to bypass content filtering systems
  - 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

- Users must not
  - intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials
  - download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
  - Use personal email addresses for school related business
  - Share their email account login detail
  - Use their school email to register for social networking services, apps or games
  - Send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
  - Access instant messaging services or chat apps on the College network
  - Access video streaming or blog services without the explicit permission of their teacher
  - Use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, and other members of the Athlone Community College community.
  - Students must not engage in online activities which might bring the school into disrepute
  - not represent their personal views as those of Athlone Community College on any platform

- Students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Sanctions

Misuse of digital learning resources may result in disciplinary action in line with the Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying policy and other relevant Policies which may be introduced and amended from time to time.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in three years' time.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management:

Date 20th/9/23

Chairperson Frankie Keena

Principal Eileen Donlon