



FIRHOUSE
EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Firhouse ETSS offers the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and, justice and equality for all. In our school, every student will be invited to learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each student to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement

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NOTE: This policy was developed using <https://www.webwise.ie/aup-2/> and in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements. We would encourage all of our school community to familiarise themselves with the *Data Protection Act* (2018).

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including:

- *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice*
- *Anti-bullying Policy*
- *Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Policy*

General Approach

The aim of this *Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)* is to ensure that students benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's digital and internet resources in a safe and effective manner as well as to provide guidance to the whole school community.

When using the digital technology students, parents/guardians/caregivers (to be referred to as parents throughout the remainder of the policy) and team members are expected:

- To live our *RESPECT* values, our *School Community Agreement* and our *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice*
- Not to undertake any actions that may bring the school community 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 digital technology including internet access in Firhouse ETSS. It also applies to staff team members, volunteers, parents and others who access digital technology and the internet in Firhouse ETSS.

Firhouse ETSS may need to respond to incidents that take place outside the school involving digital technology and the internet that impact on the wellbeing of the school community under this policy and associated policies to include the *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice* and the *Anti-bullying Policy*.

The school implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Students are provided with education and training in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the CSPE, Digital Learning and SPHE curriculum, through our induction, digital learning, wellbeing and student support programmes
- Teachers are provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety
- Firhouse ETSS participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer, more effective use of digital technology and the internet.

This policy has been developed by a working group including the principal, deputy principal, teachers, students, parents and representatives of the Board of Management.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents
- Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited)
- Internal monitoring data for network activity
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of students, parents and staff team.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal, Claire Matthews, as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or the deputy principal, Andrew Maloney, as Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP), should be informed.

Content Filtering

Firhouse ETSS has chosen to implement Level 2 on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network for the permanent site. It gives access to millions of websites but **blocks** websites belonging to the **Games** category and websites that are categorised as **Personal** such as blogs and **Social Networking** such as Flickr and Facebook. YouTube will be accessible through the app only.

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 will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to their progress leader.

Students and staff team members will only copy information from the internet with acknowledgement of the creator and referencing the source of the content.

Students and staff team members 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 be aware not to 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.

Email and Messaging

Students are provided with a school @firhouseetss.ie Microsoft email account. The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Firhouse ETSS. Students should not share their email account login details with other students. Students must have an appropriate profile image on their email account or leave it blank.

Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services unrelated to learning such as social networking services and games.

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 inform their progress leader of the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and should 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.

Email etiquette is very important. Emails should only be sent by students between **08:00 and 16:00**.

- Add a subject heading, e.g. Question on lesson 3.9 1st Year Maths.
- Greet the person.
- Use full sentences and punctuation.
- Be specific and give sufficient detail.
- Thank the person for their time.
- Sign off with your name, year and class group.

Large group emails are only permitted with the permission of the teacher in support of teaching and learning e.g. completion of a Microsoft Form to support project related data collection and research. On receipt of such emails, students are only to respond to the person who sent the email if necessary and are not to use the 'Reply All' function.

Social Media

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Firhouse ETSS:

- Personal use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Teams Chat, G Chat, Zoom etc. is not allowed in Firhouse ETSS
- Appropriate email use (not to be used as an instant messaging service)
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teachers.

Staff team members, students and parents must not discuss personal information about any member of the school community of Firhouse ETSS on social media.

Staff team members and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff team members and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Firhouse ETSS into disrepute.

Staff team members and students must not represent personal views as those of Firhouse ETSS on any social medium. E.g. Should you use Twitter and have @FirhouseETSS in your profile, you must include "views are my own".

Protocols for iPads

iPads can only be purchased through the designated supplier (Wriggle) as all iPads must be managed centrally. The iPad device is set up and monitored as an educational tool by Wriggle. The iPads are managed using an Apple ID, therefore the iPads consequently have:

1. A 'locked-in' Apple ID
2. An iPad management software that should not be modified
3. A teacher managed App download system
4. Passcodes assigned by Wriggle. These passcodes must not be revealed to other students. Parents and students are required to save passcodes in locations accessible only to them. The school does not have a record of passcodes. In the event of losing a passcode, the iPad has to be returned to Wriggle for reconfiguration with the potential loss of data and the associated delay in access to a device.

Protocols for iPad maintenance

1. Students must use protective cases initially purchased for their iPads. If this case is damaged, a replacement must be purchased from Wriggle.
2. The iPad screen is made of glass and therefore is subject to cracking and breaking if misused.
3. The iPad should not be exposed to extreme hot or cold temperature conditions, should not be stored or left unattended in vehicles or in any unoccupied classroom.
4. The iPad is subject to routine monitoring and troubleshooting by teachers at Firhouse ETSS. Therefore, teachers can access a student's iPad on request.
5. Students must have their iPads charged to a minimum of 80% every morning. Note, the iPad has a customised charger and any other generic charger affects the battery life of the iPad.
6. If the iPad is left at home, contact will be made with home for the iPad to be brought in as this is an essential learning tool.

Protocols for iPad use

1. iPads are to be used for educational purposes only, as directed by the teacher.
2. Break times are digital free zones. All digital devices must be kept in the schoolbag during these times.
3. Airdrop is only to be used with permission of the teacher.

Assistive Technology

Some students have access to assistive technology which refers to any device or system that helps to improve the functional capacity of people with disabilities ([NCSE](#)). Assistive technology usually includes a keyboard and mouse. There may be cases where a laptop is necessary for the specific needs of a student. Assistive technology applied for by the school on behalf of a student is the property of the school and is subject to the same protocols as the iPads.

Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school should follow the guidance set out in this agreement, in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

Students are only allowed to bring and to use personal internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, and digital music players into school with expressed permission from the staff team.

Students are allowed to carry mobile phones but must have them switched off and in their bags at all times.

Images and Video

Students must seek permission from each other when taking photographic or video images of each other. Attention must be paid to those in the background as well.

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 Firhouse ETSS, students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images or videos of others without their permission.

Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from the staff team.

Permission from parents is obtained as part of the admission process to the school for students for photographs of students to be published on the school website or other school publications or projects.

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 unacceptable and prohibited.

Remote Learning

In the event of remote learning, this *Acceptable Use Policy* acts as a guide to our practice as a community. Expectations that we would have in the school building are equally important when accessing online. Our *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice* and our *Anti-bullying Policy* are as relevant in the remote context.

Video Calling, Conferencing, Meetings and Live Lessons

General guidelines for video calling, conferencing, meetings and live lessons:

- 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 students when calls are taking place
- Teachers must turn on necessary security settings before allowing students to join the call e.g. chat feature, waiting room, disable co-host function if available unless being shared with a co-teacher / colleague, disable the changing of username etc.
- The teacher should always invite the students to the call and act as host
- The full name of the participant should be visible as their username.
- The teacher is always the last to leave the online meeting to ensure that students can't rejoin the room afterwards.

Additional guidelines for live lessons:

- Agree protocols in advance with students, e.g. using the chat feature for questions, raising hands if they wish to ask a question, asking students to mute mics at the beginning of a lesson in order to improve sound quality. The teacher may have to 'mute' individual mics if there is noise or inappropriate interaction in the lesson by students. This list is not exhaustive and will vary depending on the tool being used and the class group
- The teacher may use the chat feature to share links related to the learning and may invite the students to use it to ask questions. The teacher may also disable the chat feature if it is hindering the lesson.

Supporting Students with Additional Education Needs During Remote Learning

In as far as is possible, supports and protocols that are in place in school are replicated during remote learning. Parents/guardians are aware of all timetabled lessons. Parents/guardians are informed that *Collaboratory* classes (small groups) will continue to take place as will *Support for Some* classes in an online setting (Zoom or Teams). A minimum of two students are invited to *Collaboratory* and *Support for Some* classes by the teacher. In the event that a student doesn't come to their online class and a student is on their own with the teacher, the teacher can ask if the student is happy to engage in the lesson and continue as planned once the student is agreeable. If a teacher feels that the presence of an SSA would be helpful in this context they can invite the SSA should they be available. Some one-to-one online teaching support may occur upon arrangement with the student and parents/guardians.

Students with Student Support Assistant (SSA) access...

SSA support continues to be available during remote learning. This support ensures that the students with SSA access maintain their connection with the SSA team and get the support they need to engage positively in remote learning. The SSA team communicates regularly with teachers and parents/guardians to guide the students in their learning and support their wellbeing.

SSA online support includes:

- **Check & Connect** every morning
- **Check-out** every afternoon
- **Small support group meetings.** A minimum of two students are to be invited. In the event that a student doesn't come to their group meeting and a student is on their own with the SSA, the SSA can ask if the student is happy to engage and continue as planned once the student is agreeable.
- **Sensory breaks** by their nature are more ad hoc. Students may request a check-in during the school day with an SSA to help self-regulate and/or to seek support with their learning. As is the case in school, this support is often one-to-one with parents/guardians being aware that this support is available. If an SSA feels that the presence of another SSA would be helpful in this context they can invite them should they be available.
- **Weekly updates** continue to be sent by email to parents/guardians in support of the engagement in learning report on VS Ware that is available for all students.

Cyberbullying

When using the internet students, parents and staff team members are expected to treat others with our RESPECT values in mind at all times.

Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another student or member of the staff team or school community is unacceptable and prohibited.

It is ensured that the staff team, students and parents 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 responded to, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's *Relationships and Behaviour Code of Practice*.

The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the *Anti-bullying Policy* of our school.

School Website

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 monitored to ensure that the content is supportive of the safety, privacy and reputation of all members of the school community.

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.

The school will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission as given as part of the admission process for students.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Firhouse ETSS web pages.

Reviewing and evaluating the policy

The policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is being adhered to and that it continues to meet the needs of the school. On-going review should be in line with any changing information or regulations and feedback from parents/guardians, students, staff team members and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.

This policy was agreed by the Board of Management:

Signed: 

Date: 02/02/2021

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: 

Date: 02/02/2021

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Review date: May 2026 (or sooner if necessary)

Appendix 1: Checklist for annual actions arising from policy

The Digital Learning Team will monitor the actions that must be taken annually arising from this policy. The purpose of this checklist is to support the implementation of the policy.

Action	Timeframe for completion	Lead	Completed?
Training and education for students in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the CSPE, Digital Learning and SPHE curriculum, through our induction, digital learning, wellbeing and student support programmes.	Ongoing	The Team	
Teachers CPD	Ongoing	The Team	
Participate in Safer Internet Day	February	The Digital Learning Team	
Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited)	Ongoing	The Digital Learning Team	
Internal monitoring data for network activity	Ongoing	The Digital Learning Team	
Surveys and/or questionnaires of students, parents and staff team.	Discretionary	The Digital Learning Team	
Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork on the internet	Ongoing	Class Teachers	
The website will be regularly monitored to ensure that the content is supportive of the safety, privacy and reputation of all members of the school community.	Ongoing	The Digital Learning Team	