



**Callystown
National
School**
Clogherhead, Co. Louth

Callystown National School

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

1. Introduction

The Internet and digital technologies play a central role in teaching and learning in Callystown National School. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to access information, develop research skills, communicate effectively and engage creatively with the curriculum.

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) has been developed to ensure that all members of the school community can use digital technologies in a safe, responsible and effective manner. The policy applies to pupils, staff, parents/guardians, student teachers, volunteers and visitors.

The use of digital technologies within the school is considered a privilege and is subject to adherence to this policy. Failure to comply with the terms of this policy may result in the withdrawal of access and/or the application of appropriate sanctions.

2. Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that pupils benefit from the educational opportunities presented by digital technologies while being protected from potential risks. The policy seeks to promote responsible digital citizenship, support the wellbeing of pupils and ensure that all use of technology is aligned with legal and ethical standards.

3. School Strategy

Callystown National School recognises that children are growing up in a digital world where technology is embedded in many aspects of their daily lives. As such, the development of digital literacy skills is a key priority. Pupils are supported in learning how to use technology safely, how to evaluate online content critically, how to protect their personal information and how to behave responsibly and respectfully online.

Online safety is addressed across the curriculum and reinforced through planned teaching, whole-school initiatives and engagement with external programmes and supports.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community share responsibility for the safe and appropriate use of digital technologies.

Pupils are expected to use technology responsibly, to follow the instructions of school staff and to report any concerns or inappropriate content encountered online.

Staff are responsible for supervising pupils, guiding them in safe and appropriate use of digital technologies and integrating online safety education into their teaching. Staff are also expected to use digital technologies in a professional manner and in line with school policies and data protection requirements.

Parents and guardians play an important role in supporting the school by promoting safe internet use at home. They are expected to actively monitor and check their children's online activity and to engage positively with school communication platforms.

5. Internet Use

Access to the Internet is provided to support teaching and learning and is used for educational purposes. Internet sessions are supervised by school staff and appropriate filtering systems are in place to minimise the risk of exposure to unsuitable material. However, it is recognised that no filtering system is completely foolproof.

Pupils are expected not to intentionally access material that is inappropriate, illegal or harmful. In the event that a pupil accidentally accesses unsuitable content, they are required

to report the incident immediately to a member of staff. Such incidents will be dealt with sensitively and appropriately.

6. Use of Devices and Equipment

Digital devices are used within the school to support learning. Pupils are expected to follow all instructions given by their teacher when using devices and to handle equipment with care at all times.

The use of cameras, audio recording or video recording is only permitted under the direction of a teacher. Devices must not be left unattended while in use and any damage or malfunction must be reported immediately.

7. Personal Devices and Smartphone Use

Callystown National School operates as a smartphone-free school. Pupils are not permitted to bring smartphones or personal smart devices, including smartwatches, to school unless explicitly authorised by a member of staff for a specific educational purpose.

The school acknowledges the growing concerns among parents and educators regarding the impact of early access to smartphones on children's wellbeing, including issues related to sleep, social development and online safety.

Following consultation with parents, it was identified that 77% of parents support delaying access to smartphones until children have completed primary school. The school supports this approach and encourages parents to consider delaying the introduction of smartphones for their children.

The school acknowledges that decisions regarding children's access to smartphones and other personal devices outside of school are ultimately the responsibility of parents/guardians.

However, where behaviour arising from the use of such devices outside of school impacts on pupils' wellbeing, safety, or relationships within the school environment, the matter will

be addressed in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Safeguarding procedures.

The school will work in partnership with parents to support pupils in developing safe and responsible online behaviours.

8. Communication and Online Platforms

The school uses a range of digital platforms to support teaching, learning and communication. These may include educational applications and school communication systems.

Pupils will only use platforms that have been approved by the school and will not access personal email accounts or social media while in school. All communication must be respectful and appropriate, and pupils must not share personal information online.

9. Email and Electronic Communication

Where email is used, it will be under the supervision or direction of a teacher. Pupils are not permitted to send or receive material that is inappropriate, offensive or intended to cause harm or distress to others.

The sending and receiving of attachments is subject to teacher approval. Pupils must not reveal personal details about themselves or others when communicating online.

10. Social Media and Online Behaviour

Callystown National School recognises that social media forms part of modern communication. The school uses social media in a positive and responsible way to communicate with the school community."

While pupils are not permitted to access social media during the school day, the school promotes responsible behaviour online at all times.

Pupils are expected to behave respectfully, not to engage in bullying or harmful behaviour and not to share images or information about others without permission.

Parents are expected to model positive online behaviour. They should respect the privacy of all members of the school community and must not share images or information about other children without consent.

In line with the BÍ Cineálta procedures, the school recognises that incidents of online behaviour, including cyberbullying, may occur outside of school.

While the school will support pupils who are affected by such behaviour where it impacts on their wellbeing, learning or relationships within the school, it is not the role of the school to investigate incidents that occur outside of the school environment.

Parents/guardians have a key responsibility in this area and are expected to actively monitor and check their children's online activity, including use of messaging apps, social media and online games.

The school will work in partnership with parents to support pupils and to promote safe and responsible online behaviour.

11. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The school recognises that artificial intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology with potential to support teaching and learning. AI tools may be used in school under the guidance of a teacher.

Pupils may only use AI tools when directed by their teacher and must not present AI-generated work as their own. Pupils must not input personal or sensitive information into AI platforms.

Staff will ensure that any use of AI complies with data protection requirements and school policies. The school will continue to review and adapt its approach to AI as technology evolves.

12. Data Protection and Privacy

Callystown National School is committed to protecting personal data in accordance with GDPR. Personal information relating to pupils, staff and families will be stored securely and used only for appropriate purposes.

Pupils are taught not to share personal information online. Images, audio recordings and video recordings of pupils will only be used in accordance with school procedures.

13. School Website

The school website and associated digital platforms may be used to celebrate and share pupils' work and achievements.

Images, audio recordings or video recordings of pupils may be published in line with school procedures. In general, images of pupils will not be accompanied by names or any identifying personal information.

In exceptional circumstances, such as the recognition of a pupil's achievement, a pupil's first name may be used alongside an image where appropriate.

Care will be taken to ensure that all content published protects the dignity, privacy and safety of pupils.

Pupils' work may be published in an educational context, and pupils will retain copyright of their work.

14. Security Measures

The school employs a range of security measures to ensure safe use of technology. These include filtered internet access, antivirus protection and restrictions on downloading unauthorised software.

The use of external storage devices requires permission from a member of staff.

15. Support Structures

The school is committed to supporting pupils and parents in the area of online safety through education, guidance and access to appropriate resources.

Guidance is informed by Webwise.

16. Relationship to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement and Data Protection Policy.

17. Sanctions

Failure to adhere to this Acceptable Use Policy will be considered a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where a pupil behaves inappropriately when using digital technologies, including misuse of the Internet, devices, or online platforms, appropriate action will be taken. This may include the withdrawal of access to digital devices or online resources, communication with parents/guardians, and the application of behavioural sanctions in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

In more serious cases, incidents may be addressed under the Anti-Bullying Policy or Child Safeguarding procedures. Where misuse involves illegal activity, the school reserves the right to report the matter to the appropriate authorities.

18. Review and Ratification

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Management.

Signed: *Silviana de Veyga*

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed *Julie - Anne Glenn*

Principal

Date: __26/01/26

Vision Statement

Callystown National School is a Catholic School in the community of Clogherhead which aspires to develop a Respectful, Supportive, Open and Inclusive culture where Fairness, Wellbeing and Progressive Education are encouraged to flourish.