

Acceptable Use of the Internet & Digital Technology Policy

Draft Policy: Shared Oct '23
Review Date: October '25

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Acting Principal: Mrs Kielty



Holy Child Nursery School
40 Slievegallion Drive
Belfast BT11 8JP

Website: holychildnurseryschool.co.uk
Tel: 028 9062 7732

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Holy Child Nursery School vision:

Our vision is to have an exemplary school in terms of social and emotional learning, which would complement the principles of Catholic education by building upon existing good practice and positive ethos.

We hope each child will become increasingly independent, self-confident and happy, and express themselves in a variety of ways, developing a greater awareness of themselves, others and the world in which they live.

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This policy is based on and complies with DENI Circular 2007/1 on Acceptable Use of the Internet and digital Technologies in Schools

Introduction

In Holy Child Nursery School, we believe that the Internet and other digital technologies are powerful resources which enhance and potentially transform learning and teaching when used effectively and appropriately. The Internet is an essential element of 21st century life for education, business and social interaction.

The above circular states that: "Used well, digital technologies are powerful, worthwhile educational tools: technical safeguards can partly protect users, but education in safe, effective practices is a key goal for schools."

This document sets out the policy and practices for safe and effective use of the internet in Holy Child Nursery School.

Code of Safe Practice

When using the internet, e-mail systems and digital technologies, all users must comply with all relevant legislation on copyright, property theft, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity. The Code of Safe Practice for Holy Child Nursery School makes explicit to all users (staff, pupils and parents) what is safe and acceptable and what is not.

The scope of the Code covers fixed and mobile Internet; school PC's, iPads, laptops and digital video equipment. It should also be noted that the use of devices owned personally by staff, students, parents and pupils but brought onto school premises (such as mobile phones, camera phones, PDAs) is subject to the same requirements as technology provided by the school.

Code of Practice for Pupils

Pupils using the Internet will:

- be working in highly visible areas of the school
- be appropriately supervised
- use appropriate educational sites suitable for their age
- use sites pre-selected by the teacher

It should be accepted, however, that however rigorous these measures may be, they can never be 100% effective. The school cannot accept liability under such circumstances.

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Mobile Phones

The use of mobile phones by pupils is not permitted on the school premises. During school hours pupils are forbidden to play computer games or access social networking sites, unless specifically assigned by the teacher.

Code of Practice for Staff

Staff have agreed to the following Code of Safe Practice:

- Pupils accessing the Internet should be supervised by an adult at all times.
- All pupils are aware of the rules for the safe and effective use of the Internet. (*Age appropriate*)
- Staff must use agreed upon websites/ apps. Any additional material must be checked before sharing with children,
- Deliberate/accidental access to inappropriate materials or any other breaches of the school code of practice should be reported immediately to the Principal
- In the interests of system security, staff passwords should *only* be shared with the network manager.

Staff are aware that the C2K system tracks all Internet use and records the sites visited. The system also logs emails and messages sent and received by individual users. Teachers should be aware of copyright and intellectual property rights and should be careful not to download or use any materials which are in breach of these.

Photographs of pupils should, be taken with a school iPad/camera and images should be stored on a centralised area on the school network, accessible only to teaching staff. School systems may not be used for unauthorised commercial transactions.

Internet Safety Awareness

In Holy Child Nursery School, we believe that, alongside having a written safety policy and code of practice, it is essential to educate users in the safe and effective use of the Internet and other forms of digital communication. We see education in appropriate, effective and safe use as an essential element of the school curriculum.

To educate our children we:

- *Use age-appropriate language and visual resources to explain rules*
- *Encourage children to ask an adult before watching something online or something new*
- *Encourage children to ask grownups for 'KidsYou Tube'*
- *Speak about playing with toys and turning off Ipads and technology*

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- *Record any mention of talk of inappropriate viewing and discuss with parents or follow safeguarding route*

Guidance for parents:

- Know what games, sites, etc. are suitable for pre-school children.
- Promote Internet Safety in the home.
- Monitor children during screen time.
- Monitor time spent on screens.
- Keep the computer, games consoles, etc. in a communal area of the home.
- Take an interest in what children are doing. Discuss with the children what they are seeing and using on the Internet.
- Discuss how children should respond to unsuitable materials or requests.
- Remind children never to give out personal information on the Internet.
- Remind children that people online may not be who they say they are.
- Be vigilant. Ensure that children do not arrange to meet someone they meet online.
- Be aware that children may be using the Internet in places other than in their own home or at school.
- The Internet Safety Policy is available for parents by request and is also posted on the school website.
- Internet safety leaflets for parents and carers are also sent home via Seesaw.

What are the Dangers?

The Internet is an open communications channel, available to all. Anyone can send messages, discuss ideas and publish materials with little restriction. This brings young people into contact with people from all sectors of society and with a wide variety of materials some of which could be unsuitable.

Key Concerns are:

Potential Contact

Children may come into contact with someone on-line who may wish to harm them. Some adults use chat rooms or e-mail to communicate with children for inappropriate reasons.

Children need to be taught:

- That people are not always who they say they are.
- That “Stranger Danger” applies to the people they encounter through the Internet.
- That they should never give out personal details or
- That they should never meet alone anyone contacted via the Internet

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Inappropriate Content

Through the Internet there are unsuitable materials in many varieties. Some material is published for an adult audience and is unsuitable for children e.g. materials with a sexual content. Materials may express extreme views.

Materials may contain misleading and inaccurate information. E.g. some use the web to promote activities which are harmful such as anorexia or bulimia.

Children need to be taught:

- That information on the Internet is not always accurate or true.
- To question the source of information.
- How to respond to unsuitable materials or requests and that they should tell a teacher/adult immediately.

Excessive Commercialism

The Internet is a powerful vehicle for advertising. In visiting websites children have easy access to advertising which is very persuasive.

Children should be taught:

- Not to give personal details.
- Not to use an adult's credit card/order online products.

If children are to use the Internet in places other than at school e.g. – libraries, clubs and at home, they need to be educated about how to behave on-line and to discuss problems. There are no totally effective solutions to problems of Internet safety. Teachers, pupils and parents must be vigilant.

Points for Teachers to Consider

Internet use should be age appropriate, planned, task orientated and educational within a regulated and managed environment. Supervision is the key strategy. Children should have a teacher or classroom assistant present when using the Internet. Computers and iPads should be positioned so that it is possible for adults to see materials on screen. Children should know why they are using the Internet.

Discuss with pupils the rules for responsible Internet use.

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Digital and Video Images of Pupils

Written parental permission is sought at the start of each school year to cover the use of photographs of pupils on Seesaw, on the school website, in the local press and for displays etc within school.

School Website

Our school website promotes and provides up to date information about the school, as well as giving pupils an opportunity to showcase their work and other aspects of school life. In order to minimise risks of any images of pupils on the school website being used inappropriately the following steps are taken:

- Group photos are used where possible, with general labels/captions
- Names are not used
- The website does not include home addresses, telephone numbers, personal emails or any other personal information about pupils or staff.
- Website links selected by teachers may be put on the website for pupils to access outside of school – sites will be previewed and checked regularly. Parents'/Carers' permission will be sought to publish pupils work and/or photographs. These will only be published subject to the strict safeguards above.

Storage of images

Digital and video images of pupils are taken with school equipment. Images are stored on a centralised area on the school network, accessible only to teaching staff. Photographs of pupils are removed when they leave the school.

Policy Review

Internet technology and school use of resources will develop and change with time. It is our intention to revise and up-date our Internet Safety Policy as appropriate and where necessary.

This policy was developed by the Acting Principal, in conjunction with all staff and the Board of Governors. It will be reviewed every two years or when necessary, considering any new legislation.

Agreed at the Governors Meeting dated 18th October 2023

Signed: Mrs Sharon Mc Gleave (Chair of Governors)

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