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Acting Principal: Ms. Ruth Sweeney  
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# ICT Acceptable Use Policy

School Name	St. Teresa's N.S.
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## General Approach

The aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's digital or internet resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and access to internet (digital technologies) is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy, will be imposed.

When using the internet pupils, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school 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.

The school employs several strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading/Downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Teresa's N.S.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St. Teresa's N.S.

Misuse of the internet and digital technologies may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Siochana.

St. Teresa's N.S. implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE curriculum and other curriculum areas.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in St. Teresa's N.S. through our SPHE program.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.

- St. Teresa's participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed regularly by the following stakeholders:

- Board of Management and teaching staff.

This policy has been circulated to parents, pupils and staff for consideration before being brought to 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).

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the Principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the staff.

### Content Filtering

St. Teresa's N.S. has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

- Level 4: This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking 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 and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

### Web Browsing and Downloading / Internet Use

Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.

**Pupils will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials to their teacher in accordance with school procedures.**

Pupils and staff will not copy information from the internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content.

Pupils and staff 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.

Pupils will use the school's internet connection for educational purposes only.

Pupils will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Use of file sharing and torrent sites is allowed with staff permission.

Downloading by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.

### Email and Messaging

The use of personal email accounts is only allowed at St. Teresa's N.S. with expressed permission from members of the teaching staff.

Pupils should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other pupils.

Pupils should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.

Pupils will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher.

Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

Pupils will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Pupils will not use school email accounts or personal emails without permission from staff.

Pupils should 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.

Pupils should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, pupils should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.

Pupils will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.

## Social Media and Messaging Services for Staff and Students

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of your school community are expected to follow when using social media.

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in St. Teresa's N.S.:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, G Chat etc. is not allowed in St. Teresa's N.S., Ballintogher.
- Use of blogs such as Word Press, Weebly etc. is allowed in St. Teresa's N.S. with express permission from teaching staff.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.

Staff and pupils must not use social media messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, and other members of the St. Teresa's N.S. community

Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St. Teresa's N.S. community on social media.

Staff and pupils must not represent your personal views as those of St. Teresa's N.S. on any social medium.

Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Teresa's N.S. into disrepute.

## Personal Devices

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

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches and digital music players in St. Teresa's N.S.:

- Pupils are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into St. Teresa's N.S.
- Pupils are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons.
- Pupils are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time.
- Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones/camera phones/smartwatches or any other devices that can take or store images or video material in the school, on school tours or school – related activities.

#### Digital Learning Platforms (including Video Conferences)

- St. Teresa's National School digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.
- Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.
- The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).
- Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.
- Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the school's digital learning platform.

#### Images & Video

Care should be taken when taking photographic/video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

At St. Teresa's N.S. pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

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

Written permission from parents or guardians will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website. Such photographs will usually be in group situation with the use of the child's first name only.

Pupils 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. The taking of photos / video by parents at school events such as sporting occasions, plays etc. is permitted on the understanding that it is for a parent's own private use only and should not be shared or distributed.

*Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.*

#### **Inappropriate Activities**

- *Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation*
- *Misuse and fraud legislation*
- *Racist material*
- *Pornography*
- *Promotion of any kind of discrimination*
- *Promotion of racial or religious hatred*
- *Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm*
- *Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute*
- *Using school systems to run a private business*
- *Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school*
- *Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions*
- *Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial/ personal information, databases, computer/network access codes and passwords)*
- *Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files*
- *Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading/ uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet*
- *Online gaming*
- *Online gambling*
- *Online shopping*
- *Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums*
- *Child sexual abuse material*
- *Any other activity considered questionable*

#### **School Websites**

- *Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work 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 checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.*

- 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.
- St. Teresa's N.S. will generally 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.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on St. Teresa's N.S. web pages.
- St. Teresa's N.S. will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

## Cyberbullying

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, St. Teresa's National School considers that posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyberbullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyberbullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, St. Teresa's National School considers that a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour

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 St. Teresa's N.S. to ensure that staff and pupils are aware that bullying is defined as targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

In accordance with the Department of Education B'í Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, St. Teresa's National School considers that a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their B'í Cineálta policy

## Artificial Intelligence

St. Teresa's National School recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.

St. Teresa's National School will make necessary adjustments to our school's adaption and integration of AI based on review and feedback.

A regular review of the impact of AI on learning outcomes is to be conducted to ensure continuous improvement.

Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.

Learners will not create, share or send any AI generated material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Staff and learners must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame learners, their family members, staff, other members of the St. Teresa's National School community.

Staff and learners must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring St. Teresa's National School into disrepute.

St. Teresa's National School promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help learners understand AI, its implications, and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information, and recognising potential biases in AI tools.

AI Generated material is allowed for certain activities with prior school permission.

### Netiquette

Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behaviour over computer networks and in particular in the online environment. To this end:

- Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner
- Students should also recognise that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.
- Students should not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see.

### Personal Safety

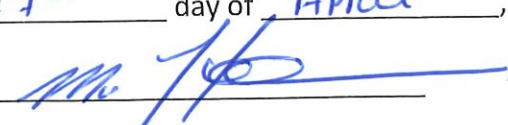
If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, they must bring it to the immediate attention of

- a teacher if they are at school
- a parent / guardian if they are at home
- Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers and birth-dates over the Internet without adult permission
- Students should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission.
- Students' images will not be shared without permission from their parents.
- Consequently, other students must not take, use or share images of or from other students in school on school online platforms.
- School videos on Vimeo or YouTube are not available for search or comment on the host sites.

### Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Teresa's N.S., Ballintogher, Co. Sligo on:

the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2026

Signed: 

(Chairperson of the Board of Management) Maura Heffernan

## Legislation

The school draws your attention to the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harrassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

## Support Structures:

The school will inform pupils and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

## Sanctions:

Misuse of the internet and digital technologies may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Siochana.

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the Internet and digital technologies outlined in the policy? I will use the Internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety, but the school cannot be held responsible if students access unsuitable websites.

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing students' work on the school website.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Acceptable Use Policy is available to view on our school website under the school policies tab [www.ballintogherns.ie](http://www.ballintogherns.ie)**

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy and sign and return this permission form to the Principal.

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_