

## **Acceptable Use Policy**

### **Aim**

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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the Code of Behaviour– will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. Before enrolling, the AUP should be read carefully by parents to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the AUP unless the school is specifically notified.

This AUP was updated by staff, parents and BOM of Marymount NS in 2020 to include distance learning.

### **School's Strategy**

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

#### General

- Internet use by students will always be supervised by a teacher.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school by pupils requires a teacher's permission.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

- It is important that parents/guardians and pupils are aware of our Anti Bullying Policy in relation to social media;
  - **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 should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.**
  - **However, in the context of this policy, placing 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.**

## **World Wide Web**

- 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 accordance with school procedures.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only during class time. During designated recreational time, they may be allowed to use the Internet for entertainment purposes. However, all web sites will be vetted by the class teacher.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- Students 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.

## **Email / Google Drive / Internet Chat**

- Children must sign a written agreement with parents and class teacher, prior to accessing school email accounts.
- School email address and drive is to be used for educational purposes only.
- Any email address provided by the school to a student is the property of Marymount NS. All content will be monitored by staff at the school.
- If a child receives any inappropriate emails, he/she should inform class teacher and a parent/guardian.
- Students will use approved class email accounts in school under supervision by or with permission from a teacher.

- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers, pictures or passwords.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will not have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication forums.

### **Web 2.0**

With the advent of Web 2.0, the Internet has become a two way communication system for the school and the wider community. Services such as Class Dojo, Facebook, Twitter and other social media are being used by the school to communicate with parents and also for parents to communicate with the school. These services, although not owned by Marymount NS, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy. For example, any content on the school's Facebook account follows the same safety rules, e.g. the showing of photographs, video, etc.

The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents. Web 2.0 is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately. We would ask:

- Many social media sites have minimum age requirements. While the school will not monitor this, we would advise parents to not allow their children to have personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, etc. until they are the appropriate age. Many social media sites will be used by teachers in class, for example, Twitter. However, all interactions will be under the supervision of the teacher.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Whatsapp, TikTok etc) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Please do not "tag" photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.
- Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages published on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- Avoid any negative conversations about children, staff or parents on social media accounts.
- Please do not request to "friend" a member of staff in the school. The staff would like to keep their personal lives personal. It may be awkward for a staff member to be asked to ignore a Facebook or other social network request.

- Please do not add advertisements to our wall without prior permission of the principal.
- Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban to our social media accounts.

### **School Website and Social Media Profiles**

- Please note that the following points apply to Marymount NS's web site and social media profiles, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Class Dojo, Edmodo and YouTube.
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web 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 of pupils or staff.
- Website using facilities such as guest books, notice boards or weblogs will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities. Photographs, audio and video clips will be used. Video clips will not be password protected.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website and social media profiles will avoid, where possible, displaying the faces of individuals in a photograph unless parental consent has been given.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use pupils' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

### **Direct Communication using Internet.**

Teachers may choose to use a number of tools for classroom communication. Examples include Google Classroom, Webex, Zoom, Seesaw, Edmodo and Class Dojo. Some of these tools provide synchronous video opportunities whereby a staff member directly speaks to the children live – e.g. through a webinar or online meeting. The staff member invites pupils and families to these meetings using a code. Written parental consent will also be required. The following are the ground rules for synchronous lessons/ meetings online.

- All meetings will be password protected.
- All people involved in the meeting will conduct themselves in a similar manner that would be expected in a regular class.

- The staff member has the right to remove/exclude from a synchronous meeting any person who is being disruptive.
- An adult family member is expected to be close by when a pupil is engaging in a meeting. They should monitor all online interactions from the pupil.
- Staff will not meet any child alone using an online meeting. If there is a need for a meeting between a child and a staff member another adult must be present at the meeting and the meeting must be recorded by the staff member.
- While chat may be available in an online meeting, it is the responsibility of the child's family to ensure that any interaction is appropriate. Any interaction from a pupil that is deemed inappropriate may result in the child's removal from the lesson/meeting or where appropriate, a referral to Child Protection Services.

### **Personal Devices (eg. Mobile Phones, smartwatches etc.)**

- Pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance text messages, or the unauthorised taking of images with a mobile phone camera or watch, still or moving is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Children's mobile phones or other devices may be brought to school with the permission of the teacher/principal. They must be turned off at all times while on the school premises and kept in the child's schoolbag. Mobile phones should not be visible at any time during the school day. This also applies to school excursions/tours/trips.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to communicate changes in drop-off/pick up arrangements directly by telephone message to the school office or by note to the class teacher. Children's mobile phones may not be used for this purpose.
- The school cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage of personal devices brought into the school.
- Failure to comply with the above will result in the mobile phone/device being switched off, confiscated, and stored in the Principal's office. Parents/Guardians will be informed of this by phone/note in journal. The device will be returned to the parents/guardians the following day or on the day of confiscation following agreement of parents/guardians to a review of the school's Acceptable Usage Policy with their child.

### **Legislation**

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet (on school website) which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998

- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988
- Anti Bullying Guidelines for Primary Schools (2013)

### **Support Structures**

Marymount NS endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents and pupils feel supported in same.

- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks regularly for pupils from 2nd – 6th class.
- The school will regularly provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for parents and guardians.
- The school will encourage Community Gardaí to link in with classes re Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying on a regular basis.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to AUP, internet safety and Cyber Bullying.

### **Sanctions**

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour. Sanctions can include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

### **Review**

This policy was reviewed in 2024 and will be updated in line with department guidelines.

### **Ratification**

This policy was last ratified by the BOM .

