

eSafety and Acceptable use Policy

This Policy is based on and complies with DENI Circular 2007/1 on the Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools. It also takes on board the key elements of DENI Circular 2011/22, 2013/25 on eSafety.

In Ashgrove Nursery School we believe that the Internet and other digital technologies can open up a world of opportunity and knowledge for our children. Such resources are very powerful and have the potential to enhance and potentially transform teaching and learning when used effectively and appropriately. This Nursery School provides children with opportunities to use a wide range of technological tools to enhance learning. We are acutely aware of the dangers associated with using ICT and Digital Technology and of our duty of care to enable pupils to use on-line systems safely.

Definition: What is eSafety?

'Online safety means acting and staying safe when using digital technologies. It is wider than simply internet technology and includes electronic communication via text messages, social environments and apps, and using games consoles through any digital device. In all cases, in schools and elsewhere, it is a paramount concern'.
DENI, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools, April 2017

This Policy applies to all members of the school community (including staff, students, pupils, volunteers, parents/carers, visitors) who have access to and are users of school ICT systems, both in and out of school.

'Safeguarding and promoting pupils' welfare around digital technology is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with the pupils in the school or on school-organised activities'.

DENI, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools, April 2017

Purpose and Scope

This document sets out the Policy and practices for the safe and effective use of the internet and various technologies used at Ashgrove Nursery School. It has been put in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils (Article 17 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003) and to determine the measures to be taken at a school to protect pupils from abuse (Article 18 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003).

This Policy has been drawn up by the staff and Governors of the Nursery School under the leadership of the Principal.

The following documents have been used to create our Policy:

Departmental Guidance

- DE Circular 2007/1 - guidance on Internet Use Policy
- DE Circular 2011/22 - advice on the safe use of the internet and digital technologies

- DE Circular 2013/25 - guidance on e-Safety policy and Acceptable Use Policy
- DE Circular 2016/27 - guidance on online safety

DHSSPS Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2016) - Section 7.2.9 offers advice on Risks of Misuse of Digital Technologies.

eSafety in the School context

In January 2014, the SBNI published its report 'An exploration of e-safety messages to young people, parents and practitioners in Northern Ireland' which identified the associated risks around online safety under four categories:

- Content risks: the child or young person is exposed to harmful material.
- Contact risks: the child or young person participates in adult initiated online activity.
- Conduct risks: the child or young person is a perpetrator or victim in peer-to-peer exchange.
- Commercial risks: the child or young person is exposed to inappropriate commercial advertising, marketing schemes or hidden costs.

Our E-Safety Policy is therefore built on the following core principles:

- Guided educational use

Use of the Internet and Educational Apps will be carefully planned and targeted within a regulated and managed environment.

- Risk assessment

We have a duty to ensure children in our Nursery School are not exposed to inappropriate information or materials. We also need to ensure that children know how to ask for help if they come across material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

- Responsibility

Internet safety in our Nursery School depends on staff, parents, carers and visitors taking responsibility for the use of internet and other communication technologies such as mobile phones and tablet devices.

Why is it important for our Nursery School to make use of various forms of technology?

The use of technology will never take the place of high quality teaching and learning, however, technology is an essential element in 21st century life. The Nursery School therefore has a duty to provide children with quality technological experiences as part of their learning opportunities.

Technological devices are also used in the Nursery School to support the professional work of staff, to allow effective planning and to enhance the Nursery School's administration systems.

What does our Nursery School use in terms of ICT and Digital Technology?

- Desktop Computers
- Laptops
- Digital cameras
- Tablet devices
- Remote Control Cars
- Metal Detectors
- Walkie Talkies
- Programmable devices such as Bee Bots
- Apple TVs

This list is not exhaustive and will be added to as appropriate resources and finances allow.

Code of Safe Practice

When using the internet and all of our digital technologies, our Nursery School will comply with all relevant legislation relating to GDPR, on copyright, property theft, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity.

The Code of Safe Practice for Ashgrove Nursery School makes explicit to all users

(staff and pupils) what is safe and acceptable and what is not.

The Principal will monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Practice, particularly in the light of new developments in technology.

Code of Practice for Children

Children will access all ICT resources through a protected system, supported and advised by the by The Nerve Centre and taking on board information on DENI website in the ICT in schools section. Following this guidance will ensure that the educational use made of resources, is safe and secure, whilst protecting users and systems from abuse. In addition, the following key measures have been adopted by Ashgrove Nursery School to ensure our pupils do not access any inappropriate material:

- Children using the ICT resources will work in highly-visible areas of the school;
- All online activity is for appropriate educational purposes only and is accessed and downloaded only by the teaching staff in order to minimise risk;
- Children will only use programmes, apps (using Guided Access) which have been pre-selected by the teaching staff and appropriate to their age group and suitable for use in the Classroom;
- All devices will be password protected, the passwords only being known to Staff;
- Advertisement Blockers are in place for when staff and children are using the Internet;
- Parental/security controls are installed on the PCs which the children use;
- Privacy settings are installed on all devices;
- The history of usage on any device that is used by the children will be checked by the Staff.

Code of Practice for Staff

Staff have agreed to the following Code of Safe Practice:

- Staff will be trained in GDPR requirements and apply this to their everyday work when using technology
- Staff will be made aware of copyright and intellectual property rights and will not to download or use any materials which are in breach of these;
- Photographs of children will be taken with a school camera/iPad and images will be stored on a centralised area on the Office PC;
- School systems will be password protected and not be used for unauthorised commercial transactions;
- Staff will log off when they have completed using relevant IT devices;
- Through Nursery School training opportunities, staff have been made aware of and recognise that it is their responsibility to report any misuse of mobile phones/websites/email to the Principal for further disciplinary action;
- Staff will not become involved in conversations within Social Network Sites where information on children attending Nursery School could be shared.

How will filtering be managed?

- Mrs Cruickshank (Principal) and Mrs McAlister (Class Teacher) will ensure that the appropriate filters are applied to technology in the classroom and to the PC in the office;
- All Staff will monitor the websites and Apps being used by the children during Nursery sessions. They are responsible for ensuring that material accessed by children is appropriate and for ensuring that the use of any apps/internet derived materials by staff or by children complies with copyright law. If staff discover unsuitable sites have been accessed in Classroom, so that filters can be reviewed.

- Children will be encouraged through visual prompts and conversations with staff, to inform them of anything that they are unsure of appearing on a technological device being used.

Nursery School website

Our Nursery school website promotes and provides up to date information about the Nursery school, as well as showcasing children's work and other aspects of school life. To minimise risks of any images of pupils on the school website being used inappropriately, the following steps are taken:

- The point of contact on the Nursery School website will be the Nursery School address, e-mail and telephone number. Staff or children's home information will not be published;
- Website photographs which include children will only be uploaded with parental consent and will not allow individual children to be clearly identified;
- Pupils' full names will not be used anywhere on the website, particularly in association with photographs;
- Group photos will be used where possible;
- Written Parental permission will be sought at the start of each school year to cover the use of photographs/video footage of pupils within observations, on the school website, in the local press and for displays etc. Parents/carers wishes are always adhered to;
- The Governors' Zone on the website is password protected and only available to those who serve on the current Board of Governors.

Further Information on the use of Digital Images of Pupils

Staff are permitted to take digital /video images to support educational aims, but must follow school policies concerning the sharing, distribution and publication of those images. These include:

- Images only being taken on school equipment. The personal equipment of Staff will not be used for such purposes;

- Ensuring that pupils are appropriately dressed when taking digital/video images and that they are not participating in activities which might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute;
- Storing photographs on iCloud or on the Nursery School iPads which are securely held in a lockable cupboard.

Mobile Phones

In order to safeguard and protect our children at Ashgrove Nursery School, we have a strict no mobile phone policy for inside the classrooms and in the Outdoor Environment. This applies to staff, volunteers, students, visitors and parents.

Staff and students may use their mobile phones during their breaks in the Link Room or Office, when they are not involved with the children.

Strictly no photographs will be taken on mobile phones of parents of children belonging to the Nursery School.

Staff are aware that mobile phones are a necessity for Educational Visits. In these instances, they will only be used for capturing the learning, for communication between staff or in the case of an emergency, when parents need to be informed or outside help is needed.

Social Software/Use of See Saw App

Currently, our Nursery School makes us shares photographs of the children's learning through the See Saw Package. All are password protected, facilitated and managed by the Clerical Officer and Class Teachers. Only two members of each family can have a code access to See Saw.

These family members sign an agreement not to share any of the posted images/videos on any Social Networking sites.

Failure to comply with this agreement will result in the Nursery School withdrawing the See Saw use service to that particular family.

Informing Parents

Parents will be made aware of our eSafety Policy at the Nursery School Induction Evening. They will also be signposted to copies of the Policy in full, which are located in the Nursery School Entrance Hall.

General Misconduct by Staff

Deliberate abuses by staff in relation to what is contained within this Policy will be dealt through the Nursery School's disciplinary procedures. Deliberate abuses which happen outside our Nursery School, but which impinge upon or affect school pupils and/or staff, will be dealt with through appropriate PSNI and legal action.

Handling Complaints

Any complaints about the appropriate use of the internet or other technologies will be handled through the complaints procedure.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is essential that this Policy and practices are kept under regular review as new challenges, threats and legal requirements emerge on an on-going basis.

Rules and regulations in relation to e-safety will be kept up to date in order that we can act appropriately and effectively when required.

This policy will also be monitored within the self-evaluative culture of our Nursery School.

See also:

- GDPR Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Volunteers Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Comments and Complaints Policy
- Parent Consent forms

“Schools have a responsibility to ensure that there is a reduced risk of pupils accessing harmful and inappropriate digital content and should be energetic in teaching pupils how to act responsibly and keep themselves safe. As a result, pupils should have a clear understanding of online safety issues and, individually, be able to demonstrate what a positive digital footprint might look like. DENI, Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools, April 2017

This Policy was initially adopted by the Governors on 15/03/16. It was last reviewed on 2024 and will be further reviewed on an annual basis.