



Acceptable Usage Policy for Internet Use

Rath National School, Baltimore

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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. Before enrolling, the AUP should be read carefully 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.

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 sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software from the PDST.ie is used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- 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 and other digital storage media in school 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 in accordance with our Anti-Bullying Policy

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. Occasionally during Golden Time, they may be allowed to use the Internet for entertainment purposes. However, all web sites will be vetted by the class teacher. However, children cannot use social media account or record images, audio or video of other pupils or staff.
- 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 use 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 / Internet Chat

- Students will not be given access to email. However, they will be provided with Google credentials for accessing other communication tools such as Google Classroom.
- 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 passwords, addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know online
- Students will note that sending and receiving files is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students will not have access to email, social media, chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication fora.

Internet

The Internet has become a two way communication system for the school and the wider community. Services such as YouTube, ClassDojo, SeeSaw, Wordpress, 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 Rath NS, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy. Please refer to the school's Data Protection Policy for further information on how the school utilises 3rd party services.

The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents. The Internet is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately.

The schools asks:

- 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. Children will not be allowed to use their own personal accounts for social media.
- Please do not "tag" photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.
- If you are uploading a photograph, please ensure that it does not identify the child in any way. Please make sure photograph size is kept as small as possible (no bigger than 1200 pixels)
- Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages written 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. If you have an issue with something in the school, social media is not the place to raise it.

- Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban to our social media accounts.

School Website

- Please note that the following points apply to the school's web site.
- 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.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages and the school's social media.
- 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. This shall also apply if any of our content is being shared with local organisations for example: Ilen Rovers GAA club, Rath Parish Journal Committee, Skibbereen Chamber of Commerce, Baltimore Tidy Towns etc. (Please note that this list is not exhaustive) Child & Data protection will always be taken into account.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will avoid publishing the full name of individuals in a photograph.
- 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.
- If projects or photos etc are submitted during remote teaching are to be used for our website, you will be notified beforehand that you are sending them for this reason, to give your permission to share this.

Direct Communication using Internet

Teachers in the school may choose to use a number of tools for classroom communication. Examples include Google Classroom, Zoom, SeeSaw, and ClassDojo. 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 their families to these meetings using a code or on their separate Google classroom streams. The following are ground rules for synchronous lessons online. (live lessons via Google Meet)

- All meetings will be password protected. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable. Please note that due to our staff size it is not possible for 2 adults to be present during live lessons so we request that parents or older family members supervise also.
- For video calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
- 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 any person being disruptive from a synchronous lesson.

- A 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 except for the Support Teacher during school closures or if child is in the High-risk category for Covid and cannot attend school. In exceptional circumstances (during school closures) at the request of a parent, a class teacher may arrange an extra support meeting for a student with him/herself. A parent should be present at this also.
- 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 could be deemed as inappropriate may result in the child's removal from the lesson or, where appropriate, a referral to Child Protection services. The chat/comment box is to be used for the purpose of the lesson and not for general chat between the pupils unless specified by the teacher.
- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- It is the duty of parents/guardians to supervise children while they are working online and to ensure any content which they are submitting to their teacher is appropriate.
- Staff members can communicate with pupils and their families via class email or through an established app (eg. Seesaw & Google Classroom).
- Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
- Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified and give permission to use (Seesaw & Google Classroom)
- Rath NS cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are hacked.

Personal Devices

Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school. In exceptional circumstances, where a pupil does bring a mobile device to school, it must remain switched off during the school day and may not be used, for any purpose, on school premises & grounds or on school bus.

Mobile devices must be handed up to the class teacher in the morning.

Legislation

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

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Children First 2018
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Support Structure

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

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: David Sheehy (virtually) Updated January 2021

Date: to be signed at our next BOM meeting

Our thanks to Carlow Educate Together for their policy template