

Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy

- Electronic communication equipment
- Acceptable Use policy, AUP

Introduction

Scoil Pól accepts that the use of ICT and electronic communication equipment (collectively to be referred to as technology) is increasingly part of a modern lifestyle and that students and staff of the school use such equipment/devices on a day-to-day basis. This equipment may be the property of the school or may belong to individuals who may wish to use such equipment on the school environs or at home. The purpose of this policy is to define the acceptable use of ICT and electronic communication equipment.

Electronic communication equipment includes, but is not limited to: personal computers, laptops, computer peripherals, cameras, mobile phones, personal digital assistant's (PDAs), sound and/or video equipment and any device which may be used to record, store and or transmit digital or electronic files, pictures or sound.

ICT refers to communication networks.

General Statement:

The possession and/or use of ICT and electronic communication equipment within the school and its environs, on school trips, or which in any way affects life in the school, is acceptable only when the general health and welfare of others is not put at risk. The use of technology in Scoil Pól, or use of technology by students which in any way affects life in the school should be in accordance with the ethos of Scoil Pól. At no time is it acceptable to use any technology for the purposes of bullying, intimidation or hurting others.

Students bring privately owned technology/electronic communication equipment to the school or on school trips entirely at their own risk. The school will not take responsibility for and is not liable for the misuse of, the loss of, damage to, or theft of any privately owned equipment or devices.

Electronic Communication Equipment

The use of all electronic communication equipment is permissible with the permission of the teacher in charge and only under teacher supervision and specific instructions. The use of all electronic communication equipment is not allowed at break-times/lunch-times.

Mobile Phones/Wearable electronic communication devices

It is accepted that mobile phones/wearable electronic communication devices are widely used by students and may be brought onto the school environs. This is permissible, but it is understood that all students must use these devices in a responsible and mature manner.

Mobile phones/wearable electronic communication devices must be switched off/immobilised from 8:55 until end of last class. If a student is found to be using a mobile phone during this time it may be confiscated and may not be returned until the end of term unless collected by the student's parent/guardian.

These devices must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others. This principle applies but is not limited to telephone calling, voice mailing, texting or recording, or sending of images. Photographs may not be taken without the prior consent of the person who is being photographed. The sending of unwelcome texts or images, and the making of unwelcome calls to others is regarded as a serious offence. Use of mobile phones/wearable electronic communication devices to download, store, record or transmit unacceptable images, video, sound, texts or other files is entirely unacceptable and will lead to the confiscation of the device(s) and will be sanctioned as outlined below.

Cameras

The use of a camera is permissible with the permission of the teacher in charge and only under teacher supervision and specific instructions.

Cameras must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others. Photographs should not be taken without the prior consent of the person who is being photographed. Any use of cameras to intimidate others is forbidden. Any such occurrence will be viewed by the school as an act of bullying and will be sanctioned accordingly.

Sound recording equipment

The use of all sound recording equipment is permissible with the permission of the teacher in charge and only under teacher supervision and specific instructions.

Sound recording equipment must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others.

Sound recordings should not be made without the prior consent of the person who is being recorded.

Personal Laptops/tablets/PDAs (including Palm/Pocket devices)

The use of all laptops/tablets/PDAs is permissible with the permission of the teacher in charge and only under teacher supervision and specific instructions.

Use of laptops/tablets/PDAs must not be contrary to the school **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** for the school Network/ Internet.

Laptops/tablets/PDAs must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others. Use of laptops/tablets/PDAs to download, store, record or transmit unacceptable images, video, sound, texts or other files is entirely unacceptable and will lead to the confiscation of the device and sanctions up to and including expulsion may apply. The school reserves the right to request a student to submit his/her laptop/tablet/PDA for inspection if, in the opinion of the school, a student is suspected of inappropriate use.

Personal Music Players (radios/MP3 players/iPods/Walkmans/Discmans/etc)

The use of all Personal Music Players is permissible with the permission of the teacher in charge and only under teacher supervision and specific instructions.

Students may not use the school computer facilities to download files or music to their personal music player.

Sanctions for the misuse of electronic communication equipment or devices privately owned or otherwise

Misuse of electronic communication equipment will be sanctioned as per code of behavior.

Inappropriate use of electronic communication equipment will be sanctioned as outlined below.

The school reserves the right to confiscate any electronic equipment privately owned which, in the reasonable opinion of the school, may have been used to intimidate, hurt or offend another person. Such equipment may be returned to parent/guardian.

The school also reserves the right to prohibit the use of certain equipment in the school where the health, safety or welfare of any person, including the owner of the equipment, is judged to be at risk.

Where electronic equipment is judged to contain inappropriate or offensive material,

the school reserves the right to inspect such equipment.

Where equipment is believed to have been used in the possible abuse of others, or where possible legal issues may arise in the future, the school reserve the right to hold the privately owned electronic equipment until legal advice has been received.

In the case of repeated misuse of electronic equipment or where a serious offence has occurred, a student may be sanctioned up to and including expulsion from the school.

The school Computer Network

The Internet is a global computer network that offers a wealth of resources. Students can use the Internet to locate material to meet their educational needs. As with all technology, the school encourages students to view the Network as a tool to further assist study and education generally.

As information on the Internet appears, disappears and changes, it is not always possible to predict or control what students may locate or use. They might encounter information that is inaccurate, controversial, and potentially harmful.

As part of the school's IT plan we offer students supervised access to the Internet. The Internet will be used to further educational goals and objectives, but students may find ways, accidentally or intentionally, to access undesirable materials as well. We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages, but ultimately, parents and guardians are responsible for setting and conveying the attitudes and standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

During school, teachers may guide students toward materials suited to their courses. Outside school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, magazines and other potentially offensive media.

In exercising its duty of care, the school uses filtering software on its education network to prevent accidental or intentional access to unsuitable websites. It is impossible to filter out every potentially harmful website but every effort is made to do this. These filters are automatically updated on a regular basis. Access to the Internet by students is closely monitored by their supervising teacher so that if a site appears to have by-passed the filters it will be blocked to prevent further access. The school uses software to monitor all use of the school computer facilities. In particular parents should note that Scoil Pol cannot be held responsible if students access unsuitable websites, but every reasonable precaution is taken by the school to provide for online safety.

The school has invested heavily in advanced computer facilities and these need to be protected for the use and benefit of all students and staff. The Acceptable Use Policy

(AUP), which is based on the government sponsored National Centre for Technological Education (NCTE) AUP guidelines, is outlined below.

Acceptable Use Policy

Scoil Pól is connected to the **Schools Broadband Network**, which is controlled and managed by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) which is under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills.

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students 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 the Acceptable Use Policy will be revised as necessary and parents and students will be informed of any changes. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to indicate that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

School's Strategy

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

General

- Access to network connections will always be supervised by a teacher
- Students will not examine, change or use another user's network logon account.
- Students will not reveal their logon password to another student nor shall they logon as another student or allow another student to logon using their account.
- The use of the network for commercial purposes is forbidden
- Content filtering implemented and provided by the NCTE will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
- The school may monitor students' Internet usage as necessary
- Students will be made aware of Internet safety
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted
- Virus protection software is used and updated as necessary

- The use of personal storage media (floppy disks, CDs, DVDs, memory sticks, etc) 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.

World Wide Web

- Students will not knowingly 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.
- 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.
- 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

E-mail

- Students will use approved e-mail accounts under supervision by and permission from a teacher.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, and 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 or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through use of ICT.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Internet Chat

- Students will not create, access or use chat rooms, bulletin boards, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums.
- Students will not use voice over Internet protocols (VoIPs), eg. skype

Inappropriate Activities

- Students will not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to: child sexual abuse images/ promotion or conduct of sexual acts/ racist material. To do so is unacceptable and illegal and will be dealt with accordingly.

- Students will not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to: pornography/ promotion of any kind of discrimination/ promotion of racial or religious hatred/ threatening behavior, 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. To do so is unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Students will not use school systems to run a private business
- Students will not use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school and/or NCTE
- Students will not upload, download, transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties without the necessary licensing permissions
- Students will not reveal or publicise confidential or proprietary information
- Students will not create or propagate computer viruses or other harmful files
- Students will not use on-line gambling sites
- Students will not access social networking sites

School Website

- Students may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Students' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips of individual students will not be published on the school website. Instead photographs, audio and video clips, if present, will focus on group activities.
- The school will endeavor to use 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 appear on school web pages.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Personal Devices

Students using their own technology should follow the rules set out in this agreement. They will only use hand-held/external devices in school if they have permission.

Bullying

- Students should note that the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy applies also to the use of the school computer facilities.
- School IT facilities must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others.
- Students who maintain their own websites should not use these sites to bully intimidate or hurt others whom they know by association with the school. Images or other files relating to the school or to individuals in the school should not be posted to websites without the consent of the school or of the individual and in all cases names should not be attached to such images or files.

Legislation

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

- Child Trafficking and Pornography Bill 1997
- 1993 Interception Act
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003

Support Structures

The school, on request, can 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.

In the case of a breach of the Law, a criminal prosecution may result.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management (BOM) on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of BOM

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____