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## **Internet Acceptable Use Policy**

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# **Acceptable Use Policy**

## **Aim**

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 internet resources in a safe and effective manner.

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions as outlined in the Code of Behaviour will be imposed.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of Information Technology provided by St. Brigid's BNS.

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, In-School Management Team, teachers, pupils, parents/carers, and representatives of the Board of Management.

## **School's Strategy**

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

### **General**

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMS or other digital storage in school requires a teacher's permission.
- Students will treat each other 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 and cyber bullying.

### **Content Filtering**

St. Brigid's BNS has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

- Level 3: This level allows access to millions of websites including games but blocks YouTube, and 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, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

### **Web Browsing and Downloading**

- Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to the Principal.
- 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 only for educational purposes.
- Pupils will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.
- 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 not allowed.
- Downloading by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

### **Email and Messaging**

- The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at St. Brigid's BNS .
- Pupils will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Pupils will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- 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.
- Students will never reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers, pictures or passwords.
- Students will not have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication forums.

## **Distance Learning**

We recognise that online collaboration is essential for distance learning and that families are in favour of increased opportunities to maintain the connection between school and home. St. Brigid's BNS may help to provide access to a variety of online tools, which will assist in providing more effective teaching and learning, while also enabling greater communication between staff, families and students.

### **Guidelines for good online communication**

- Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
- 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 Aladdin or through an established agreed app (e.g. Showbie).
- 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 (Aladdin, Showbie)
- Parental permission will be acquired before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum.
- For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
- St. Brigid's BNS are not responsible for any breaches of security on any third party applications used (e.g. Aladdin, Showbie).
- Communication using a mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.

### **Guidelines for staff members using online communication methods**

- Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours of 8.30am - 3pm, where possible.
- Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.
- Staff members will seek to become familiar with apps before using them with pupils and will instruct pupils about the appropriate use of features of the applications.
- Staff will check that consent has been given, before setting up a pupil profile for an online app.
- Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.

## **Rules for pupils using online communication methods**

For submitting learning:

- Submit work and pictures that are appropriate.
- Use kind and friendly words.

## **Guidelines for parents and guardians**

- It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
- Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
- Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

## **Social Media**

The safety of students on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents.

### **Staff and Pupils:**

- Staff and pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, other members of the St. Brigid's BNS community
- Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St. Brigid's BNS community on social media.
- Staff and pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Brigid's BNS into disrepute.
- Staff and pupils must not represent their personal views as those of being St. Brigid's BNS on any social medium.

### **Parents and Guardians:**

- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g.: Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Viber etc.) on mobile phones and devices to ensure that they are aware of their child's interactions with others and approve of same.
- If you are uploading a photograph on social media please ensure that it does not include or identify any child other than your own. Do not "tag" photographs or any content that may identify any children or staff in the school.
- Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages 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 and messaging services (e.g.: Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Viber etc.)

### **Personal Devices**

- Mobile phones are strictly prohibited by order of the school's Board of Management.
- Pupils are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into St. Brigid's BNS. These devices include tablets, watches, gaming devices, digital music players and any future internet enabled technologies.

### **Images / Video /Audio**

- Pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos, videos and audio recordings on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website.
- 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.

### **Cyberbullying**

- 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 to ensure that staff and pupils are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.
- 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 will 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.
- The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

## **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 publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- St. Brigid's BNS will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips which focus 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. Brigid's BNS web pages.
- St. Brigid's BNS will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

## **Sanctions**

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

St. Brigid's BNS will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases St. Brigid's BNS will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

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

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored and amended as required by the In-School Management Team and the Board of Management.

## **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
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

- Anti-Bullying Guidelines for Primary Schools (2013)

### **Review and Ratification**

This policy will be reviewed and updated in line with Department guidelines. This policy was reviewed and ratified by The Board of Management in **October 2020**.

**Ratified by the Board of Management of St. Brigid's B.N.S. on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020.**

Signed: *Seán Moran*

Chairperson Board of Management





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Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Internet Permission Form**

As part of the school's education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. This allows pupils access to a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance the learning experience.

However, access to and use of the Internet requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy – please see school website for Policy details [www.stbrigidsbns.ie](http://www.stbrigidsbns.ie). It is important that this policy is read carefully, signed by a parent/guardian and student and returned to the school.

Although the school takes active steps to promote safe use of the Internet, it recognises the possibility that students may accidentally or deliberately access inappropriate or objectionable material.

The school respects each family's right to decide whether or not to allow their children access to the Internet as defined by the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Having read the terms of our school's Acceptable Use Policy, you may like to take a moment to consider how the Internet is used in your own home, and see if there is any way you could make it safer for your own family.

Please return the attached A.U.P. Permission Form to your son's class teacher by

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## **A.U.P. Permission Form**

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

Pupil's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Pupil's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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 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.

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

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

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