



Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál
New Inn, Cashel,
Co. Tipperary
E25 VH05
Phone (052) 7462122

Acceptable Usage Policy

Introduction and Aims

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of Internet use in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál is to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management, information and business administration systems.

The aim of our Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils, teachers and parents will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources including learning platforms in a safe, responsible 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the AUP, will be imposed.

Staff/People employed by the school/student teachers/volunteers etc. who breach the AUP may be dealt with by the Board of Management's disciplinary procedures and/or child protection procedures. *See School's Child Safeguarding Statement.

This AUP was updated in January 2021 to include Distance Learning and reviewed in May 2024.

School Strategies

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál will employ a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

General

Systems including filtering software will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material and block unsuitable sites.

- The school will regularly monitor Internet usage
- Teachers will supervise internet sessions held on school devices.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety. Webwise in primary schools is the key resource used for teachers.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted. Google family link software in place in childrens devices
- Virus protection software will be used.
- The use of personal USBs, CD-ROMs or DVDs in school requires permission.
- Students will observe good "netiquette" (i.e. etiquette on the Internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- It is important to note that the school's Anti-Bullying Policy should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Parents/guardians and students should be aware that placing a once-off, offensive or hurtful internet 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.

Tablets:

School Tablets are managed by the school. Apps can only be uploaded to and removed from the Tablets by the Principal

In the event school Tablets are loaned to parents/guardians for the purposes of distance learning the management and supervision of these Tablets is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

World Wide Web

- Sites that the children use in school will be previewed by their teacher before use.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes and/or as deemed appropriate by the teacher -e.g as a reward or for golden time etc.
- Teachers and students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- All Internet users in Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored.
- Students and staff (including people employed by the school/contractors etc) will not visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Children should inform their teacher if they inadvertently access information that makes them in any way uncomfortable. In the unlikely event that this should happen, the children will be reassured and their parents will be notified. Also, where possible, the offending URL will be noted and the service provider will be informed.

Distance Learning

In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers may use Seesaw, Zoom, Edcite, GETEPIC or other platforms approved by the Principal as platforms to assist with remote teaching where necessary. The school has signed up to the terms of service of the Online Platforms in use by the school. The School has enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these Online Platforms provide. Parents/guardians will be provided with the password and will be expected to monitor their child's use of the Online Platforms. If teachers are using Zoom, parents must consent by submitting their own email address for their child to access lessons on Zoom or by consenting and providing a family Email.

The following are ground rules for synchronous lessons online such as Zoom, Seesaw, Edcite and GETEPIC

- All meetings will be password protected- Invite only.

- All people involved in the meeting will conduct themselves in a similar manner that would be expected in a regular class.
- The Teacher/ staff member has the right to "remove" any person being disruptive from a synchronous lesson.
- 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 pupil is required to partake in zoom calls in a communal space (i.e. not their bedroom).
- School does not give any permission for any recording of the school/ Class Zoom.
- Only the recognised name of either Pupil or Parent/ Guardian will be allowed enter from the waiting room.

School Website and Social Media

- Please note that the following points apply to the school's web site.
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork and school work on the World Wide Web with parental permission
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages of the school's Website/ 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. These will be published for pupils of parents who have completed the school's permission form.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Education

Pupils will learn 'Digital Citizenship' to educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet.

21st century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks - to become internet wise.

Resources that may be used to implement this programme include

- Use of the 'Kids' section on the www.webwise.ie website
- SAFT Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme and exemplars

Filtering

'Filtering' is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance.

Many browsers have their own built in filtering tool e.g. Google. Google's search engine has a built-in "Safe Search". This filter eliminates sites that contain pornography and explicit sexual content from search results. It is easily applied by clicking on the **Preferences** link on any Google page. Unfortunately it is also easily removed.

Legislation

The following is legislation relating to use of the Internet with which teachers, students and parents/guardians should familiarise themselves where appropriate:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 <http://justice.ie/80256E010039E882/vWeb/pcJUSQ5YUHTP-en>
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1998.html>
- Interception Act 1993 - <http://www.acts.ie/zza10y1993.1.html>
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1989.html>
- The Data Protection Act 1988
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA25Y1988.html>
- EU General Data Protection Regulations 2018

Support Structures

Websites offering support and advice in the area of Internet Safety have been listed on the "Favourites" menu of each computer connected to the Internet.

- Webwise - <http://www.webwise.ie/>
- Better Internet for Kids - <http://www.betterinternetforkids.eu>

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action according to the School's Code of Conduct, and/or the school's Anti Bullying Policy and/or the school's Child Safeguarding Statement. The Code of Conduct includes recorded warnings, notification of parents, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

*Please Refer to School's Code of Conduct/Anti Bullying Policy/Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment for further information.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

The following are available in the Appendix:

- Letter to Parents
- Responsible Internet Use Pupil Undertaking Form
- Internet Permission Form
- School Website Permission Form

Ratification & Communication

This policy was officially reviewed and ratified by the BoM

Signed:

Date: 13 May 2024

Principal: *Tomás McLoughlin*

Chairperson: *Breda Hickey*

Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

Letter to Parents

Date:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the school's education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. This will allow pupils vast educational opportunities by helping them for example, locate material for projects, communicate with students from different cultures, become independent in controlling their own research and become independent learners.

While we as educationalists recognise the value of the Internet as a resource, we must also acknowledge the potential risks to students. We feel that the answer is not to ban the use of the Internet in school but to teach pupils to recognise the risks and to become Internet Wise. We also allow limited access to 'YouTube' on a strictly supervised basis. This is to allow access to a huge range of educational material. The filter to prevent access to unsuitable material on YouTube is also in operation.

This process is the responsibility of the school and the parent/guardian.

For this reason we have compiled a school policy on Internet safety. Parents must also set and convey standards of usage to their children.

It is important that you read the school's Internet Policy.

Parents should discuss this document with their children to ensure that they clearly understand the school rules with regard to Internet usage.

Mise le meas,

Principal

Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál

Appendices

Responsible Internet Use - Pupil Undertaking

We use the School computers and Internet connection for learning. These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site
- I will not bring external storage devices such as pen drives (or memory sticks/USB keys etc) into school without permission
- I will not use email for personal reasons
- I will only use email for school projects and with my teacher's permission
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible
- When sending email, I will not give my home address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone
- I will ask for permission before opening an email or an email attachment
- I will not use internet chat rooms
- If I see anything I am unhappy with, or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the sites I visit
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed.

Signed:

Pupil(s)

Signed: _____ **Parent/Guardian Date:** _____

Name of Pupil(s):

Class(es):

As the parent or legal guardian of the above child, I have read the Internet Acceptable

Use Policy and grant permission for

(name(s): son/daughter) to access the Internet. I understand that school internet usage is for educational purposes only and that every reasonable precaution will be taken by the school to provide for online safety.

I accept my own responsibility for the education of my child(ren) on issues of Internet Responsibility and Safety.

I understand that having adhered to all the enclosed precautions the school cannot be held responsible if my child tries to access unsuitable material.

Signature: 1. _____

Parents/Legal Guardians

Date: _____

School Website

I understand that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the school's website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Usage Policy in relation to publishing pupils' work and photographs of school activities on the website.

Signature: 1. _____ 2. _____

Parents/Legal Guardians

Date:
