



# Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy

(including Permission/Consent Form)

## Rationale and Aims

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (A.U.P.) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered via the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if a pupil does not adhere to the responsibilities associated with the use of our school's internet resources, this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined in this AUP and the school's Code of Behaviour, may be imposed. The policy also includes a section in relation to the use of images and recordings of school events, of pupils and their work.

Before signing the accompanying consent form, this Acceptable Use Policy should be read carefully in its totality to ensure that the conditions of internet use and the use of images and recordings of school events, of pupils and their work are accepted and clearly understood.

## Policies that Support this Acceptable Use Policy

The following school policies support our Acceptable Use Policy. These policies are available from the school office and most of them are also available on our school website [www.rathpeaconns.com](http://www.rathpeaconns.com).

- Admissions
- Health and Safety
- Child Safeguarding
- Code of Behaviour
- Supervision
- Anti-Bullying
- Special Educational Needs
- Guidelines for Distance Learning
- After-School Activities
- Attendance
- School Tours and Outings
- SPHE plan

There are occasions where the Acceptable Use Policy and practices arising from the policy may be brought to the attention of the Board of Management to be reviewed and updated as a result of observations by staff, parents and pupils.

## **School Strategies**

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are set out below:

### **General**

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems are used in order to eliminate the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Pupils and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- Staff will educate pupils about the risks associated with the taking, using, sharing and publication of images and personal information.
- Guidelines for staying safe online will be published in the school journal.
- Uploading and downloading of approved software is done by the school staff only.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school will require a teacher's permission in all circumstances.
- Pupils will treat others with respect at all times when online and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

### **Internet**

- Pupils will not intentionally visit Internet sites other than those approved by the supervising teacher or Special Needs Assistant.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Pupils will use the Internet at school for educational purposes only.
- Pupils will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Pupils will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is a direct breach of this school's acceptable use policy.
- Pupils will be made 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 - Pupils:**

- Pupils must only use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Sending or receiving any inappropriate material is forbidden.
- Pupils must not use the school's internet resources to reveal their own or other pupil's personal details at any time.
- Pupils must never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from a teacher in every circumstance.

**Email - Parents/Guardians and Staff:** (See also Guidelines for Distance Learning and Code of Behaviour on school website.)

- Each staff member has a school email address which they will share with parents/guardians of pupils they work with at the start of each school year. Parents/guardians may also use the school office email.
- These email addresses are set up to facilitate easy communication between home and school, particularly during unexpected and extended school closures e.g. COVID-19. They are not a forum for complaints or other issues.
- Staff will endeavour to check their school email during school hours on days when the school is open. 'Out of Office' replies will be set up during school holidays.
- Parents/guardians should be aware that as teachers have full time teaching duties, they may not be in a position to reply immediately to an email but they will reply at their earliest possible opportunity and certainly within 48 hours.
- School staff will, at all times, endeavour to be professional about their work and communications with parents/guardian and pupils.
- When replying to parents/guardians with their school email address, teachers will observe GDPR regulations. Teachers are advised to use Aladdin Noticeboard or Aladdin Email to send messages or notices to groups of parents/guardians. Teachers should not use their new school email address to reply to a group of parents. Teachers must make every effort to ensure that parent/guardian's email addresses are not shared with other parents/guardians.
- School staff are entitled to work in a safe environment free from abuse of any kind and must be treated with respect at all times, including online.
- It is school policy that staff will inform the Principal of any issues of concern that arise on emails.
- Inappropriate, aggressive, abusive, threatening or intimidating emails of any description from pupils, parents /guardians or other persons are deemed unacceptable and will be reported to the Board of Management and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- Any misuse or abuse of a teacher's email address will result in the sender's email address being blocked indefinitely
- A formal written apology and an undertaking that such behaviour will not reoccur is required.

### **Internet Chat**

- Pupils will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the supervising school teacher.
- Chat rooms, discussion fora and other electronic communication fora will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
- Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
- Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via Internet chat is forbidden.
- Cyber-bullying via the internet is dealt with under the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policies

### **School Website / Blog**

- Staff are permitted to take digital/video images for the school website but must follow this policy with regard to best practice. Staff are reminded regularly of best practice and at each staff meeting.
- Staff will ensure that when taking digital/video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

- 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 pupils' work will be co-ordinated/supervised by a teacher.
- Images to be published on the website will be selected carefully and will comply with good practice on image use.
- Two members of our In School Management team, Ms. Brennan and Ms. O'Farrell are appointed as moderators to oversee that there is no content uploaded that compromises the safety of pupils, families or staff.
- School website user facilities such as the "comment" section will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details. Comments will only be uploaded when approved by the teachers who coordinate the website.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on web pages.
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing **on group activities only.**
- **Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website without written parental permission.**
- Pupils' **full names** will not be used anywhere on the website, particularly in association with photographs.
- A pupil's **first name** may be used.
- Video clips of school activities are embedded onto the school website via YouTube. These clips, however, are "unlisted" on the YouTube website. Ms. Niamh Brennan is appointed to co-ordinate school YouTube videos.
- Pupils will continue, where relevant, to own the copyright on any work published.
- Written permission will be obtained from parents/guardians (on the attached Permission Form) on enrolment to Scoil Náisiúnta Mhuire before any images of pupils or their work are published on the school website.

## Media

- The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that photographs or videos taken by parents on school property or of school events will be for personal use only and not for social websites (e.g. Facebook) or other public media of any description.
- The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that content recorded by pre-arranged / approved outside agencies (e.g. television companies, newspaper photographers) will only involve groups of children. Where individual / single children are photographed or recorded, we will always seek parental permission.
- **This policy will be made very clear to any individuals/companies who wish to use school photographs/recordings.**
- Articles that include images are also sent for inclusion in the Muskerry News monthly publication. Protocols in relation to this are the same as for the school website as set out above.
- From time to time, the school will forward digital images and/or videos of school events, pupils and pupils' work to the media including social media pages e.g. the Blarney Blog and Muskerry News Facebook pages, Twitter or other social media pages deemed appropriate by the school.
- The school will make every reasonable effort to ensure that content forwarded to the media, including social media pages will only involve **groups of children.** Pupils' **full names** will not be forwarded. A pupil's **first name** may be used. We will always seek the consent of a parent/guardian before forwarding images or recordings of individual children.

- Inappropriate, abusive, aggressive, threatening or intimidating comments etc of any description from pupils, parents/guardians or other adults towards pupils, staff or the school on social media is deemed unacceptable. Any such incidents will be reported to the Board of Management and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

## **Personal Devices**

Pupils are forbidden to use their own technology (mobile phones, smart watches, game consoles, tablets etc) in school. Bringing such devices to school and engaging in activities such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in school, sending text messages, or the unauthorized taking of images (still or moving) with a mobile phone camera or other device, is in every circumstance a serious direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy.

## **Sanctions**

Misuse of this Acceptable Use of I.T. Policy may result in disciplinary action under our Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. These may include 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.

## **Legislation**

The school will, where requested, provide information on the following and relevant legislation (as amended) relating to the use of its Internet resources:

- Education Act 1998
- Child Care Act 1991
- Child Protection (Amendment) Act 2000
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989

## **Support Structures**

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet. Guidelines for Safe Internet Use and Safe Mobile phone use are published in the school journal. Parents/guardians and school staff will be invited to information meetings regarding Internet Safety.

## **Ratification**

The A.U.P. was updated, ratified and adopted by the Board of Management in May 2009. It was further updated and ratified at its meeting of June 9th, 2014. This current AUP was adopted by the Board of Management on 24th of November 2021. An original signed copy is on file in the school office.

**Signed:** *Fiona Monahan*  
Chairperson of Board of Management

**Signed:** *Susanna O'Neill*  
Principal

**Note:** Permission/Consent Form on page 6 below. If you have any concerns about your child and the use of Information Technology in the school please send an email to: [office.rathpeaconns@gmail.com](mailto:office.rathpeaconns@gmail.com).

# Acceptable Use of Information Technology - Permission/Consent Form

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

**Declaration of Pupil:** I agree to follow my 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 Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian can sign on behalf of a Junior Infant Pupil).

## Declarations of Parent/Guardian

### 1. Internet Access

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and now grant permission for the child named above to access the Internet at school. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes only. I also understand that every reasonable and prudent precaution has been undertaken by the school to ensure online safety.

I accept the above paragraph ☐ I do not accept the above paragraph ☐ (Please tick as appropriate).

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

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

### 2. School Website: Section 1 - Pupils' Schoolwork

In relation to the school's website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion thereon. I understand and accept the terms of the school's Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing children's work on the school's website.

I accept the above paragraph ☐ I do not accept the above paragraph ☐ (Please tick as appropriate).

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

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

### 3. School Website: Section 2 - Photos/Videos of Pupils

I understand and accept that if the school considers it appropriate, **group photographs and videos** that include my child may be chosen for inclusion on the school website. I understand and accept that the school will seek my written permission before any **individual photographs or videos** of my child are uploaded onto the school website.

I accept the above paragraph ☐ I do not accept the above paragraph ☐ (Please tick as appropriate).

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

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

### 4. Media: Section 1. Pupils' Schoolwork

In relation to the media, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen to forward to local/national media, including social media pages for inclusion thereon. I understand and accept the terms of the school's Acceptable Use Policy relating to forwarding children's work to the media.

I accept the above paragraph ☐ I do not accept the above paragraph ☐ (Please tick as appropriate).

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

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

### 5. Media: Section 2. Photos/Videos of Pupils

I understand and accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, **group photographs and videos** that include my child may be chosen to forward to the media, including social media pages for inclusion thereon. I understand and accept that the school will seek my written permission before any **individual photographs or videos** of my child are uploaded onto the school website.

I accept the above paragraph ☐ I do not accept the above paragraph ☐ (Please tick as appropriate).

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

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