



Internet Acceptable Use Policy

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This policy was reviewed & amended in September 2020 as schools re-opened after extended closures due to Covid 19.

This policy is in line with our GDPR policy, anti-bullying policy & child safeguarding procedures and prepares for eventualities of blended or on-line learning that may occur in the future.

This policy was revised by the Board of Management on ____10th January 2021____

Signed: ____*Willie Swayne*____ Chairperson

Signed: ____*Aidan McEvoy*____ Principal

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Aim of Acceptable Use Policy

The aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from the learning opportunities by the school's internet resources in a safe & 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 If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

When using the internet pupils and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content & resources.

This Acceptable Use Policy applied to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in Scoil Mhuire. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, students on placement and anyone else who accesses the internet in Scoil Mhuire.

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

Scoil Mhuire 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 Scoil Mhuire will, where known, inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Scoil Mhuire implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet. Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE curriculum. Internet safety advice and support opportunities will be provided to pupils in Scoil Mhuire through talks & workshops, for example, Zeeko education & Community Liaison Gardaí. Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety. Parents will be invited to attend workshops in school and as offered by Laois Education Centre (LEC) & advised to access information/guidance on www.webwise.ie. Scoil Mhuire participates in Safer Internet Day activities each year to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy & its implementation will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire. This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal, Senior Management Team & teachers in consultation with parents, pupils & representatives from the Board of Management.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, Mr McEvoy, school Principal, should be informed. The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy will be monitored by Mr McEvoy together with the Senior Management Team.

Content Filtering

Scoil Mhuire has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the schools broadband network:

Level 4 – This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but 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 bypass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including verbal warning, notifying parents, withdrawal of access privileges and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

Teachers should consider the age of the pupils when introducing apps or new technology for learning. Teachers are recommended to check age requirements and appropriateness of each platform in advance.

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, or in school but outside the classroom to their class teacher.

Pupils and staff will not copy information from the internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content. Scoil Mhuire holds a valid certificate from the Irish Copyright Licensing Agency CLG & MPLC Umbrella Licence which ensures copyright compliance of materials, DVDs, media or downloads.

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 schools internet connection for educational activities only.

Pupils will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that may 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, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

Downloading materials or images by pupils that are not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

Online Games

Pupils in Scoil Mhuire will not engage in online games unless given express permission by the class teacher.

Email and Messaging

Pupils will not send any material that is illegal, obscene and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person. For example, via Aladdin or Seesaw.

Staff members will communicate with pupils and their families via Aladdin Connect primarily and also at times Seesaw.

Pupils and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified. For example, Seesaw, class Dojo, Spellings for me.

In the Senior Classes, class teachers may set up a teacher email account for pupils to submit PowerPoint presentations, work on Microsoft word etc.. The class teacher will be responsible for this account and only pupils of the class will be given these email details.

Teachers should be mindful of their own privacy and boundaries. It is best to avoid giving personal details. Staff should give the school email, address and phone number rather than personal ones where at all possible.

Distance Learning

In the event of a prolonged school closure, for example, Covid or any other such reason, work set by the class teacher will be posted to Aladdin Connect one week at a time. Any instructional teaching videos deemed necessary by the class teacher will be posted to Seesaw. In the event that the HSE advises that a whole class must isolate for 14 days, work will be issued daily via Aladdin Connect by the class teacher.

Teachers will post a weekly greeting message to their class.

Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of these video messages.

Teachers of classes 4th-6th may use forums such as Webex, Zoom or Google meets to engage with their class. This is optional, if parents do not wish their child to attend the 'virtual classroom' they can inform the class teacher. There will be a code of behaviour issued to the children beforehand; strict adherence to these rules will be expected. Pupils will be required to behave in a kind & respectful manner towards teachers and peers at all times. Teachers will impose sanctions for any inappropriate online behaviour which may result in the child being removed from the online meeting.

Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours 9am – 3pm where possible.

Queries in relation to work set can be sent by parent to teachers via Aladdin Connect. Teachers will reply via Aladdin Connect, where possible between 9am – 3pm.

Children’s work can be uploaded via Aladdin Connect or Seesaw.

Staff, families & parents are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful & kind manner when online.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to supervise their child/children whilst they are working online and to ensure any content they are submitting to their teacher is appropriate.

Communication via phone will only be in the rare exception that it is deemed essential. Staff members will ensure their caller ID is private.

Social Media

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Scoil Mhuire.

The use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, GChat etc.. is not allowed in Scoil Mhuire.

Use of blogs such as Word Press, Tumblr etc.. is allowed in Scoil Mhuire with the express permission from the teaching staff.

Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc.. is with express permission from the teaching staff.

Staff & pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the Scoil Mhuire community.

Staff and pupils must not use the school email address 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 Scoil Mhuire into disrepute.

Staff and pupils must not represent their personal views as those of being Scoil Mhuire’s on any social medium.

The school has a Facebook page ‘Scoil Mhuire Abbeyleix’ & Twitter account ‘@SAbbeyleix’ These are used to promote, celebrate and showcase pupils work & achievements. It is also another way of communicating forthcoming events to parents.

The Scoil Mhuire Facebook account has two administrators – Ms Lowry & Ms Dowling. Children do not have access to this account. Comments on the Facebook page are expected to be appropriate and respectful at all times. Any derogatory comments towards staff or children will not be tolerated and will be removed by the administrators.

The Twitter account administrator is Mrs Hynes. Children do not have access to this account. Again, comments & replies to posts are expected to be appropriate and respectful, if they are not, they will be removed.

Personal Devices

Pupils are not allowed to bring personal internet enabled devices into Scoil Mhuire, ie, phones, tablets, smart watches etc..

The children in Naomh Bríd, travelling to school on the bus are allowed personal devices for the duration of the school journey. These devices will be handed to the bus escort for safe keeping and will not be taken into the classroom.

Images & Video

In Scoil Mhuire pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images/videos of others without their permission.

Written permission from parents/guardians will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website, Twitter, Facebook or the local papers.

Children's full names will never appear alongside their digital image; instead, where possible they will be referred to by their class grouping. If a child's image is displayed for a particular individual achievement, they will be referred to by first name only.

Children's digital images will not remain on the website after they leave 6th Class or if they move to another school.

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 of school.

Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of pupils and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other pupils automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Cyber bullying

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 unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour with serious consequences and sanction for those involved.

Measures are taken by Scoil Mhuire 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 of the school.

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.

The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

School Website

The school website is www.scoilmhuireabbey.ie, the administrator of the website is Mrs Hynes.

The school website will be a means of providing parents, students & others with information about our school. It will be used to promote & celebrate achievements, successes & all positive aspects of daily school life.

Pupils may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the website in accordance with clear guidelines and an approval process regarding the content that can be loaded to the schools website and with consent from the class teacher.

Personal student information including home addresses and contact details will not be published on Scoil Mhuire web pages.

Scoil Mhuire will avoid publishing the full name of pupils in videos or picture captions published on line. They will for the most part be referred to by class name or in some cases by first name only, for example, celebrating individual successes.

Permission Form

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of our schools education programme, we offer all pupils supervised access to the internet. This allows students access to a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance the learning experience. For children in the senior classes this means researching information and locating materials, the children in the junior classes will use the internet to access educational websites or apps that reinforce their work in the classroom.

In order to protect your child, we have installed 'level 4 Fortiguard Filtering Software' provided by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) which restricts access to inappropriate material and blocks websites belonging to the 'Personal websites' & 'Social networking' category. Therefore, websites, blogs & apps such as Snapchat & Facebook are not accessible within the school. Children in Scoil Mhuire will be supervised at all times whilst using laptops/tablets and accessing the internet in their classrooms. All staff of Scoil Mhuire are familiar with the Acceptable Use policy, the importance and the need for it.

Whilst we at Scoil Mhuire take active steps to promote safe use of the Internet, take measures to ensure that suitable restrictions are in place with regard to the children accessing inappropriate materials and provide information on how to stay safe online in our teaching and through workshops for children and parents such as those provided by Zeeko Education. We do however, recognise the possibility that pupils may accidentally or deliberately access inappropriate material. The school cannot be held responsible for the nature or content of materials accessed through the internet.

Children's digital images will only be published on the school website www.scoilmhuireabbey.ie, Facebook & Twitter accounts with parental permission. The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Children's images when used, will not appear alongside their full name.

To promote and celebrate events and occasions in Scoil Mhuire, children's digital images may be published in the local newspapers, The Nationalist & The Leinster Express. Children will be referred where possible by class grouping, for example, children in 3rd Class visit Abbeyleix Bog or by first name only. Their full names will not appear in the publications.

Please review the schools Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sign and return the attached permission form to school as soon as possible.

If you have any concerns regarding any of the above and wish to discuss it with us, please contact myself, Mrs Slevin (Deputy Principal), Mrs Hynes (Assistant Principal, Website & Twitter Co-ordinator), Ms Lowry (Facebook & Seesaw Co-ordinator), Ms Dowling (Facebook Co-ordinator) or Mrs Walsh/Ms Thompson (ICT Co-ordinators)

Le Meas

Aidan McEvoy (Principal)

Permission Form

I agree to follow the School's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) 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.

Student's Signature: _____ (3rd – 6th Classes)

Children's names: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil(s), I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my child/children 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.

I give permission for my child/children to have their work or photograph published on the school website, Twitter, Facebook or in the local newspapers.

NB: Children's full names will not appear beside their digital image, rather they will be referred to as a class grouping, or in some cases by first name only.

Signature: _____

Please review the School's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), sign and return this permission form to school. Thank you.