



Internet Acceptable Use Policy

GENERAL APPROACH

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to agreed sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP at least annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

When using the internet students, parents 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 and resources.

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

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.

- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Patrick's National School.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St. Patrick's National School.

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

St. Patrick's National School 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 and other curriculum areas.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in St. Patrick's National School through our ICT, SPHE, Anti-Bullying programmes.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- St. Patrick's National School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

Board of Management, teaching staff, support staff, pupils, and parents

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal and teachers.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents.
- Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited).
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the school principal or deputy principal should be informed.

SCHOOL'S STRATEGY

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximize learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as per the following sections:

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the class teachers, principal and school ICT Coordinator.

General– The following will apply to the use of computers, devices & internet at school. Parents will be responsible for monitoring and supervising computer usage at home.

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimize the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of memory sticks or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's 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.
- St. Patrick's N.S. will participate in Safer Internet Day annually to raise awareness about staying safe online, using the internet responsibly and protecting their online identity.

CONTENT FILTERING

St. Patrick's National School 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.

Students 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.

SCHOOL WEBSITE - <https://ballinamuckns.ie/>

The website's primary aim is to improve the communication flow between teachers, parents, students, Board of Management, Parents' Association and other interested bodies as appropriate.

School Website - Approved Content Guidelines:

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web 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.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of students or staff.
- Parents will be given the opportunity to withhold permission to have photographs of their child/children uploaded on to the website.
- Parents who are enrolling pupils from 2010 onwards will be given the opportunity to allow permission to use photographs on the website on the Enrolment form.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips are permitted provided that they focus on group activities and have parental permission <https://ballinamuckns.ie/publishing-of-work/>
- Digital photographs of children should focus on the activity they are engaged in.
- Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website without the parental permission.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- Class details (i.e., lists, numbers, etc.) will not be published on the website.
- Pupils in photographs may only be identified by first names only.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web i.e., hovering on an image will not display the student's name in a text box.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

WORLD WIDE WEB

- Students will not intentionally 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.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- 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

Email and Messaging

- The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at St. Patrick's National School.
- Pupils will not send any material that is illegal, obscene or defamatory. Nor shall they send material that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Pupils will not use school email accounts or personal emails.
- Pupils and staff 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.
- All teaching staff have their own professional email address. This email address is used to communicate with parents/guardians regarding any queries, questions or concerns they may have regarding the progress of their children.
- Teachers will ensure that parent/guardian email addresses will remain private.
- Emails will be sent on an individual basis or sent to groups using the Bcc facility.
- Parents/guardians will be contacted using email addresses from the pupil enrolment form.
- Additional email addresses can be added on request.
- Parents will not share teacher's email addresses with third parties without consent.
- Staff should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious.

ALADDIN SCHOOLS

'Aladdin Schools' is a management information system used for administration purposes in St. Patrick's N.S. Aladdin data is fully encrypted and is stored and processed in compliance with Irish and European data protection laws. All data stored on Aladdin for school purposes is secured with passwords only known to the school's administrator. Teachers have access to data relevant to their class only.

Our school is delighted to announce that we have rolled out the Aladdin Schools Connect to parents/guardians of children in our school since June 2022. The school uses the Aladdin Schools software service www.aladdin.ie for administrative purposes and Connect will give you secure access to messages from the school and to details of your child's attendance, test results, report cards etc via secure login from your internet browser or Aladdin Connect App.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in St. Patrick's National School

1. Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tik Tok etc. is not allowed by students in St. Patrick's National School
2. In school, the use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is only allowed with express permission from teaching staff.

- 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 or other members of St. Patrick's National School community.
- Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, parents, staff and other members of St. Patrick's National School 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. Patrick's National School into disrepute.
- Staff and pupils must not represent their personal views as those of being St. Patrick's National School on any social medium.

FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100095211915647>

The purpose for having a school Facebook page is:

- To continue to advance our school communication system with information shared via Facebook, along with the existing methods of paper notes, text messages and the school website.
- To communicate with parents regarding specific events and activities.
- To publicise school events and increase awareness about school fundraising.
- To announce any updated information.
- To highlight positive school achievements in a forum where they can be shared by the school community e.g. photos of pupils' projects, activities, field trips etc.
- To make school announcements e.g. school closure due to snow etc.
- To use Facebook as a means of marketing the school to a wider audience.
- To engage the community that St. Patrick's National School serves and act as a key component of our school's online presence.
- To facilitate communication and networking opportunities between parents especially new or prospective parents.
- To maintain contact with past parents and past pupils.

Terms of use of St. Patrick's National School Facebook Page:

- Users cannot advertise products or services on our Facebook page.
- Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed as offensive.
- inappropriate or harmful comments or content will be removed immediately.
- Users should not engage in giving negative feedback on Facebook. It is more appropriate to deal with the school directly on such matters.
- Users will not mention individuals in a negative way — pupils, staff or other members of the school community — on the school Facebook page.
- Users should not ask to become "friends" with staff as failure to respond may cause

Offence.

- Users cannot tag or name pupils on photographs on the school Facebook page.
- Users should not add comments which could identify pupils on Facebook.
- The minimum sanction for any user breaking these terms is an automatic removal from our Facebook page.

Points to Note

- Facebook lists a minimum age requirement of 13, and all parents are reminded that pupils under the age of 13 should not be on Facebook. Therefore, current pupils cannot be accepted as users,
Unacceptable uses of Social Media sites and their Consequences.

IMAGES AND VIDEO

- At St. Patrick's National School pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities are only allowed with express 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.
- Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of pupils and/or minors is an illegal and unacceptable behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.
- Sharing explicit images of other pupils automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyber-bullying can occur at any time and in any place but most often outside school. It is reported that in many cases parents struggle to promote appropriate online behaviour, check their children's IT usage, or ensure their children stay safe while on-line. In conjunction with our Parents' Association, we encourage parents to be fully aware of the capabilities of any device or digital platform they allow their children use.

When using the internet pupils, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times.

Measures are taken to ensure that staff and pupils understand bullying as defined by the Department of Education and Skills. This is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. 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 is also regarded as bullying behaviour.

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.

As stated in our Anti-Bullying Policy, serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the *Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the TUSLA Children and Family Agency and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

PERSONAL DEVICES

Personal devices are not allowed in school, unless for authorised reasons and/or in exceptional circumstances communicated in advance as per the mobile phone policy. The unauthorized taking of images, still or moving, and recording of audio is prohibited on all school devices and is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

Mobile Phones

- Mobile phones will be confiscated by the class teacher.
- The class teacher will inform the principal immediately. The principal or class teacher will phone the parent of the child and request for the parent to collect the phone from the school.

LEGISLATION

The school will provide information on legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with. Links to the full text of these acts are available in the Resources for Schools section of www.webwise.ie

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 Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

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.

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.

COMMUNICATIONS

This is an area of rapidly evolving technologies and uses, a wide range of rapidly developing communications technologies has the potential to enhance both teaching and learning.

Communication Technologies	
• Use of mobile phones in lessons	Not allowed
• Use of mobile phones in social time (Break and Lunch)	Not allowed
• Use of mobile phones on school related activities.	Allowed with staff permission.
• Taking photos on personal mobile or personal camera devices in school.	Not allowed
• Taking photos on personal mobile or personal camera devices on school related activities	Allowed with staff permission.
• Taking photos on school camera or other cameras devices.	Allowed with staff permission.
• Use of hand-held devices e.g., PDA/ PSP	Allowed with staff permission.
• Use of personal email addresses in school, or on school network	Allowed with staff permission.
• Use of school email for personal emails	Not allowed
• Use of chat rooms / facilities	Not allowed
• Use of instant messaging	Not allowed
• Use of social networking sites	Not allowed
• Use of blogs	Allowed with staff permission.

Inappropriate Activities		
User Actions		
Users shall 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	Unacceptable and illegal.
	promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g., under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation	Unacceptable and illegal.
	racist material	Unacceptable and illegal.
	pornography	Unacceptable.
	promotion of any kind of discrimination	Unacceptable.
	promotion of racial or religious hatred	Unacceptable.
	threatening behavior, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm	Unacceptable.
	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	Unacceptable.
Using school systems to run a private business		Unacceptable
Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by SWGFL and / or the school		Unacceptable
Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions		Unacceptable
Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g., financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)		Unacceptable

■ Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files		Unacceptable
Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet		Unacceptable
■ On-line gaming		Acceptable at certain times with staff permission.
■ On-line gambling		Unacceptable
■ On-line shopping / commerce		Acceptable at certain times for nominated users.
■ File sharing		Acceptable at certain times.
■ Use of social networking sites		Unacceptable.

Misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action, including verbal /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.

**St. Patrick's National School,
Ballinamuck, Co. Longford**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of the school's education programme we offer pupils access to the Internet. All websites accessed on the Schools Broadband Network go through a level of filtering to ensure that inappropriate sites are excluded and a "Web Page Blocked" message is displayed. This allows students safe access to a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance students' 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. It is important that this enclosed document is read carefully, signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school.

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, please sign below and return to class teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Name: _____

Class: _____

		Yes	No
1.	I give my child permission to use the internet as a resource for learning during school		
2.	I give permission for my child's work, projects and artwork to be published on the school website/Facebook page - https://ballinamuckns.ie/ and that digital photographs, audio or video clips of my child in a group setting may be published. (Please note pupils will never be named individually and personal pupils' information will never be published on website)		

Signature: _____

(Parent/ Guardian)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY

The policy will be available from the principal to the B.O.M., Teachers and other staff members.

Parents and guardians can avail of a copy of the policy on enrolment of their child in the school, or on request.

The policy will be regularly evaluated and updated when necessary.

Timeframe:

It will then be reviewed annually.

This policy was reviewed by Damien McIntyre in May 2026

Ratification & Communication:

This Acceptable Use Policy has been prepared on the conditions that exist in the school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated at a future date to comply with any changes in conditions.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 20/5/26

Signed: Mary McKenna Date: 20/5/26
Mary McKenna -Chairperson

Signed Damien McIntyre Date: 20/5/26
Damien McIntyre - Principal