



# Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)

**St Caimin's Community School**



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## **1.0: Introduction**

In St. Caimin's Community School we foster a sense of community that gives practical effect to the values of our mission statement:

*Every person is valued equally in accordance with our Christian Tradition at St. Caimin's School. Each person within the school community can enjoy developing to the fullest, while feeling cared for and safe. Our educational structures are ordered, based on tolerance, fairness and respect, while sensitive to our changing world.*

This Acceptable Usage Policy has been drafted following consultation with all of the school's stakeholders. It incorporates the views of parents, students, teachers and other staff and gives practical expression to their values and insights. The stakeholders, in working together, have created a consensus as regards how the internet should be used.

## **2.0: Legal Framework**

This policy document has been informed by the following:

- [Data Protection Acts 2018](#)
- [Children First Act 2015](#)
- [Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000](#)
- [0074/2020 \(Communication/Teaching & Learning Platform\)](#)
- [Circular 0081/2017 \(Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017\)](#)

## **3.0: Scope**

This policy applies to staff, students and any others who use either the school devices and platforms and/or their own devices to carry out school business.

## **4.0: Rationale**

A school needs an AUP to enable it to function effectively and to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Moreover, it raises an awareness of online safety issues and good practice among students and staff. It also has central role in communicating risks and effective risk-reduction strategies to students in online environments.

## **5.0: Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are:

- To promote positive behaviour and thus give meaning to the mission statement
- To create a safe and secure learning environment for all students by encouraging a sense of mutual respect among all members of the school community
- To define the parameters of behaviour and specify the consequences of violating those parameters
- To identify the school strategy on promoting the safe use of the Internet and address the risks associated with its use
- To give practical effect to the Board of Management's obligation to protect the health and safety of students and staff.

## 6.0: Related policies and documents

This policy document may be read in conjunction with the following:

- [CCTV Policy](#)
- [Child Protection safeguarding statement](#) and [Risk Assessment](#)
- [Counter-bullying policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Dignity at Work Policy](#)
- [Mission Statement](#)
- [Mobile Phone Policy](#)
- [Special Educational Needs Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Behaviour](#)
- [Suspension and Expulsion Policy](#)

## 7.0: School's Strategy

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

### 7.1: General

St Caimin's Community School recognises the importance of digital learning in a modern and ever evolving education system. In this regard, various digital learning approaches are supported throughout the school via hardware infrastructure and systems of operation. The school provides internet access throughout the building on a central network that uses both wired and wireless connections. The school's internet connection is provided by the PDST and has filtering controls provided at their level. This is common across many Irish schools.

- All Internet use should be appropriate to the professional development of staff and/or the education of students.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of removable storage media in school by students and teachers is restricted.
- All users 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.
- Each user is responsible for the content and use of her/his own account and is responsible for all activities carried out under her/his account. Passwords and accounts must not be divulged to others. Students will be aware that personal password protected folders may be monitored for unusual activity.
- Users must not jeopardise, in any way, the integrity or performance of St Caimin's computing resources. No attempts should be made to circumvent schemes, to uncover security loopholes, to "hack" into systems.
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden.
- Basic training and support in the area of digital learning will be made available to students and teachers.

## 7.2: Internet

The Internet is a two-way communication system for the school and the wider community. Services such as Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and other social media are being used by the school to communicate with parents. These services, although not owned by St. Caimin's Community School, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy. For example, any content on the school's Facebook account follows the same safety rules, e.g. the showing of photographs, video, etc.

The Internet is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately. The safety of our students on the web is of utmost importance so the following guidelines apply to the school and parents.

- Many social media sites have minimum age requirements. While the school will not monitor this, we would advise parents to not allow their children to have personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, etc. until they are the appropriate age. Many social media sites will be used by teachers in class, for example, Twitter.
- Parents and guardians should regularly check their child's online activity / digital footprint. Parents should check social media apps on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
- In relation to social media, both staff and students are advised to use appropriate privacy settings.
- Staff, students and parents should be aware of what they are posting online, and that Social Media sites and applications are public forums.
- Students 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.

## 7.3: Digital Learning Platform

### Overview: Digital Learning Platform

The Department of Education *'requires all schools have in place a communication and learning platform that supports schools to respond in the event of a partial or full school closure in the future. Ideally communication and learning should be consolidated within one platform'*. In meeting this requirement, St Caimin's Community school utilises the Microsoft 365 platform. The various applications contained with this platform allow for two-way communication which supports teaching and learning both inside and outside of school.

- All teachers and students are provided with individual password-protected computer accounts.
- Users shall not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students shall not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- The Digital Learning Platform must not be used to arrange face-to-face meetings with someone students only know through e-mails or on the Internet.
- E-mail and e-mail attachments from unknown sources should not be opened and must be deleted immediately.

#### **7.4: Social Media**

St. Caimin's Community School reserves the right to investigate and deal with incidents and activities that happen outside school time and which impact on the welfare or education of students of the School.

This often applies in the case of misuse of social media sites which can lead to unfortunate online nastiness or cyber-bullying. Students shall be advised that they need to think carefully about possible serious repercussions of anything they say on the internet as well as the hurt it can cause. The minute anything unpleasant is published online it can be viewed repeatedly and by multiple users and therefore formally constitutes bullying. It is considered a serious breach of school discipline if any damaging material relating to staff, students and/or school activities is circulated, published or distributed online.

As part of any disciplinary action, the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

In relation to social media the following rules apply:

##### **7.4.1 Student use of Social Media**

When using social media, students are advised that they:

- Must respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Must not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.
- Must not bully, intimidate abuse, harass, or threaten other members of the school community.
- Must not make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community.
- Must not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the school community.
- Must only use discussions forums and other electronic communication forums for educational purposes.
- Must not use discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have not been approved by their teacher.
- Must not harm the reputation of St Caimin's Community School or those within its community.
- Must not publish video, audio or photographs of any member of the school community, without the consent of the student, parent or staff member.
- Should not post anything online that they would not want parents, teachers, future colleges or employers to see.

##### **7.4.2 Social Media for Staff and Teachers**

###### **\*Social Media Usage on a social media platform or on the school website**

- Before setting up/registering any account on social media in the school's name, staff members must seek permission from the principal/deputy principal(s).
- Staff should be aware that the property rights in a sanctioned social media account are vested in the school.
- Staff must not share confidential information pertaining to the school, its employees, volunteers, students, parents and others in the school community. Personal information about any students, parents, employees or volunteers must not be divulged or discussed on social media sites.
- Staff should not accept students or former students who are under the age of 18 as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites. In some circumstances, such as sports, cultural, community or family connections such interactions may occur, but staff should be mindful that interactions should always be appropriate.

- Staff must ensure that they do not access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate materials/images in electronic or other format.
- Staff must ensure that they do not access, download or otherwise have in their possession, at any time or in any place, illegal materials/images in electronic or other format.
- Staff must not publish video, audio or photographs of any member of the school community, without their consent (student, parents or staff).
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- Where a staff member chooses to identify him/herself as an employee of the School, s/he must make it clear that their communications do not represent the school, its ethos, position, opinions or views.
- Postings by a staff member on a social media site that are defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, hostile, pornographic, divulging personal data without consent or bring the school into disrepute will be addressed in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure and may result in disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal.

#### ***7.4.3 Guidelines for Staff who act as Administrators on Social Media Platforms belonging to the School***

- Administrators must be compliant with the terms and conditions of the relevant social media platform.
- Before sharing anything on our social media page or website, check if it meets at least one of the following criteria: highlighting talent, experiences or endeavours within the school community; providing school-related support or information, supporting a local school, charity, non-profit initiative or family and community initiatives/supports.
- Where possible and practical, images of students should not be accompanied by their full name.
- When sharing a photo of a student, only use his/her full name in the following circumstances: when linking to an outside site (e.g. a newspaper) where the student is named; when sharing a photo of a group of students and the individuals in the photo are not explicitly named; when the students in question are eighteen and have consented to their image being shared.
- Administrators should only share links to other websites, organisations or events if they have checked their suitability.
- Administrators should not respond to private messages on social media; an automated message will direct people to contact the school by phone or email.

#### **7.5: School Website**

The school website is a means of communicating important information with the school community. The website includes information and supports on the various programmes run in the school.

- All ratified policies are available on the school website along with the annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and the anti-bullying policy.
- Users will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork on the internet with the approval of Management.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Students' work will appear in an educational context on web pages.
- Personal information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.

### **8.0: Support Structures**

The school is aware of the increasing incidence of cyber-bullying. Our strategies in this regard focus on educating students on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. We do this through our own curricular provision, and also invite guest speakers to address these issues with our students. Furthermore, the Code of Behaviour for Students and the Internet Usage Policy support appropriate behaviour. In addition, the on-line content within the school is moderated by external web-filtering.

### **9.0: Sanctions**

Misuse of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in the extreme cases, suspension, expulsion or dismissal. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.


### **10.0: Review**


This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management at least every two years.

### **11.0: Ratification**

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

The policy will come into effect from 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021

SIGNED  (Chairperson of Board of Management)

SIGNED  (Principal)

Once ratified this policy will be shared on the school website and Staff Teams.



## **Appendix A: PERMISSION FORM (Completed during enrolment process to St Caimin's Community School)**

Before being allowed to use the Internet, all students must obtain permission from parents/guardians. Moreover, both student and parent/guardian must sign the Acceptable Use policy as evidence of student acceptance of the school rules as laid down in the policy.

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

### **Parent/Guardian**

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Usage Policy and grant permission for my son/daughter 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 if appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Usage Policy relating to publishing children's work on the school website.

## **Appendix B: Student Summary of AUP (to be included in Student Journal)**

### **Introduction**

This policy is linked with the vision of St Caimin's Community School along with the school's ethos. We aim to enable students to reach their full potential, both academically and socially. The policy reflects the pastoral nature of our school. Below you will find a list of guidelines and protocols you must follow. This policy applies to staff, students and any others who use either the school devices and platforms and/or their own devices to carry out school business.

### ***Digital Citizenship***

- I will show respect for myself and others through my actions.
- I will only use appropriate language and images on the school's virtual learning environment as well as any form of social media.
- I will not post inappropriate personal information about my life, or anybody else's.

### ***Protect Yourself***

- I will ensure that the information I post online will not put me at risk.
- I will report any aggressive or inappropriate behaviour.
- I will not share my password or account details with anyone else.

### ***Respect Others***

- I will not use electronic mediums to bully, harass or stalk other people.
- I will communicate with teachers in an appropriate manner.
- I will not visit sites that are degrading, pornographic, racist or that the school would deem inappropriate.
- I will not abuse my access privileges.
- I will not enter other people's private spaces or work areas uninvited.
- I will respect my peers and teachers by not using technology inappropriately in or out of class.

### ***Protect Others***

- I will protect others by reporting abuse.
- I will not forward any materials (including emails and images) that the school would deem inappropriate.

### ***Respecting Technology***

- I will take all reasonable precautions to protect my mobile device from damage.
- I will treat all school devices with care and respect.
- I will always keep school devices with me or in secure storage when appropriate.
- I will not tamper with its software or attempt to remove any restrictions.

### ***Acceptance***

By accepting this agreement, I am agreeing to all of the above rules and guidelines. I understand that failing to follow the above will lead to appropriate sanctions being carried out.