Ashton School
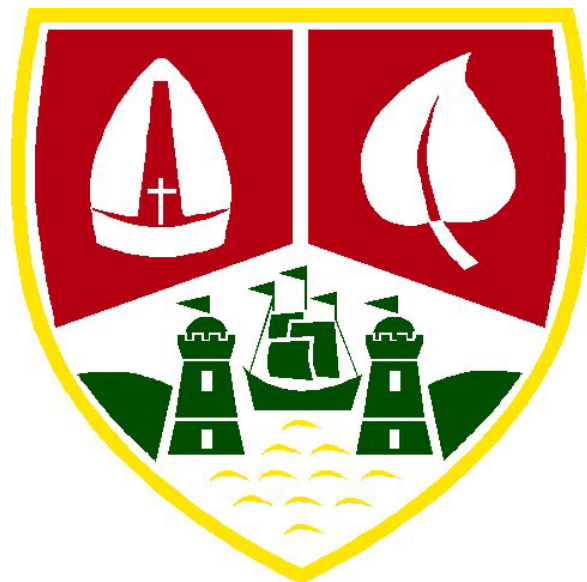
Internet and Digital Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Adopted by the Board of Management on 27th May 2024

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Contents

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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 the 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.

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 is not permitted.

- Virus and protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the Internet in Ashton School. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the Internet in Ashton School.

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Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, in line with the Code of Behaviour and Discipline. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Ashton 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 Ashton School will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place outside of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Ashton School implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the Internet:

- Students 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 Ashton School through our induction and pastoral care programs.

- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of Internet safety.

- Ashton School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the Internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed every two years and when required in consultation with school stakeholders.

Should a serious online safety incident take place, a Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal must be informed.

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Content Filtering

Content filtering is an essential and integrated element of the broadband service that is provided to schools by the Schools' Broadband Program. The purpose of content filtering is to ensure, in so far as is possible, that inappropriate websites and content are not accessible within schools.

Ashton 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 will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

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Internet Use

Students are not allowed to visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.

Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.

Students are not allowed to copy information into assignments. Failure to acknowledge the source will be disciplined as plagiarism and copyright infringement in line with the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

Students and staff will be made aware that any use, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

Students are only allowed to use the Internet for educational purposes.

Students are not allowed to engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other Internet users.

Students are not allowed to download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Downloading or viewing 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 educated and advised to never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.

Students will be aware that any use of the Internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.

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Email and Messaging

The use of personal email accounts is **not** allowed at Ashton School.

- Students are only allowed to use approved school email accounts.

- Students are not allowed under any circumstances to share their email account login details with other pupils.

- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.

- Students should be aware that email communications are subject to monitoring by the school.

Students are not allowed to send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.

Students are not allowed to reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

Students will be educated and advised to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the Internet.

Students are not allowed to forward email messages or screenshots of emails or "reply all" without the permission of the originator.

Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school-based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school-based work.

Students should report to a teacher 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 emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

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Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

The Internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities of communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of your school community are expected to follow when using social media.

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of students and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as 'X' (Twitter), chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The Internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media. Students should not engage with sites other than those approved by the school.

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Ashton School:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc. is not allowed in Ashton School.

- Use of blogs is allowed in Ashton School with express permission from teaching staff.

- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube etc. is permitted only with express permission from teaching staff.

All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the Internet in any way to bully, harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.

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Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of the Ashton School community on social media.

Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Ashton School into disrepute.

Staff and Students must not represent their personal views as those of Ashton School on any social medium.

Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

Teachers can read further information about the use of social media and electronic communication on the Teaching Council Website.

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Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school should follow the rules set out in this policy, in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

The following statements apply to the use of Internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Ashton School:

- Students are only allowed to use personal Internet-enabled devices during lessons with expressed permission from teaching staff.

- Students are not allowed to use personal Internet-enabled devices during social time.

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One-to-One Device Policy

- Students using one-to-one mobile devices must have their device with them in school every day.
- Students are responsible for the care and security of devices.
- Devices must be fully charged before coming to school.
- Devices must not be used at break or lunch time.
- Where a device is a replacement for paper textbooks, students should note that writing materials are still a requirement. Students must have the necessary writing materials (paper/pen).
- Background wallpaper and images must be appropriate.

Acceptable Use

- Devices must only be used in the classroom at the discretion of the teacher.
- Where permission is granted to use a device, students must use their own device only.
- Games, entertainment or social media may not be used during class time or at any other time within the school except under the discretion of a teacher.
- Students must not attempt to undermine, hack or bypass any security mechanisms implemented by the school.
- The use of mobile data for Internet access by a device is not allowed. This includes the use of mobile hotspots. Only the school network is to be used by students while at school. Access to the school network must only be with the student's own login and username details.
- Students must not take photos or make video or audio recordings of any individual or group without the express permission of each individual (including parent consent for minors) being recorded and the permission of an appropriate staff member.

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Security

- It is each student's responsibility to know their own logon credentials/password and to keep their password safe and secure.
- Students must not share their logon credentials/password with anyone.
- Students will be held responsible for any inappropriate/unacceptable online activity.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that their files are backed up.

Technical Issues

- Students must report technical issues promptly to Wriggle. It is the student's responsibility to make their teachers aware of the issues when they arise – not at that point when work is to be submitted.

Books

- It is the responsibility of students/parents to ensure that the correct eBooks are available on a student's device.

Monitoring

- Parents should regularly inspect the device to ensure that it is in good working order and to ensure that it is charged and ready for use every day.
- Parents should inspect the Internet history and the apps on the device on a regular basis to ensure appropriate use.

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Digital Learning Platforms

Ashton School's digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school.

Students must only use their school email address for accessing the school digital learning platform.

All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.

The use of digital learning platforms should be used in line with the considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).

Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.

Passwords for digital learning platforms and accounts should not be shared.

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Online Learning Policy

Acceptable Use of Digital Learning Platform

- Digital learning platforms used by the school must only be used for school related work and communication. The school's primary digital learning platform is MS-Teams.

Etiquette

- Appropriate online learning etiquette must be observed at all times.
- Profile pictures must be appropriate.
- Respect much be shown when communicating with staff members and other students, including reactions and emoticons, whether private or in group chat.
- Where possible students should avoid making online contact with school staff outside school hours except with the agreement of the relevant staff member.
- Students must not expect communication from school staff outside school hours.

Submission of Work

- Work must be submitted by the deadline issued by your teacher.
- Work you submit must be your own. You must not plagiarise the work of others.
- Artificial intelligence (AI) must not be used except under the guidance and at the discretion of the teacher.
- Work must be submitted electronically or on paper as requested by your teacher.

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Privacy

- Students must respect the privacy of others when using digital learning platforms.
- Students must not share personal information about themselves or others.
- School-related content must not be published on the Internet, social media sites or other digital learning platforms without the approval of the school.

Research

- Students must critically evaluate online sources of information before use.
- Sources of information must always be cited.

Intellectual Property

- Material published on the school's digital learning platform remains the property of the person who created it.
- Unauthorised editing and other modification of published work is forbidden without the expressed permission of the teacher and content creator.

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Images and Video

Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that images are appropriate and do not bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

Students 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 is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.

Students 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 students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students will be dealt with as a very serious matter under the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

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Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud.

- Misuse and fraud legislation.

- Racist material.

- Pornography.

- Promotion of any kind of discrimination.

- Promotion of racial or religious hatred.

- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm.

- 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.

- Using school systems to run a private business.

- Use of systems, applications, websites, or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school.

- Uploading, downloading, or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions.

- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords).

- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files.

- 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.

- Online gaming.

- Online gambling.

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- Online shopping.

- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums.

- Child sexual abuse material.

- Any other activity which may reasonably be considered questionable or unacceptable by the school.

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School Websites

Students may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the Internet where prior approval has been sought and granted by the school.

Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Ashton School web pages.

Where the school publishes image files online it will ensure they are appropriately named.

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Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chatrooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Ashton School considers that 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 will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

When using the Internet, students, 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 student or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken by Ashton School to ensure that staff and students are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal,

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psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyberbullying even when it happens outside the school or at night. In addition, the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures, 2013 defines cyberbullying as "placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour".

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

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Legislation

Teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with legislation relating to use of the Internet, including:

- 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

The school will inform students of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies is referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline and relevant sanctions are outlined. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.