

MONASTERY NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Monastery NS Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) 2024 for;

- the internet, school computer network and internet enabled devices
- personal devices, new and emerging technologies
- The recording and broadcast of audio and video footage
- Staff / Parents' / Pupils use of personal devices and use of school communications
- School Social media such as Facebook / Instagram

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils, teachers and parents will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. As part of the school's education programme, we offer pupils supervised access to the internet. This allows pupils to access a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance their learning experiences.

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the AUP will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly in line with developing technological issues. The original version of the AUP was created in February 2016, reviewed in October 2024 and ratified by Monastery NS Board of Management on October 22nd 2024.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with our Anti-bullying policy which also deals with the issue of cyberbullying.

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

General:

- Internet sessions in school will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Netiquette and online safety is taught through our SPHE curriculum and during our annual Internet Safety Week
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.

- Pupils and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Parents are issued annually with Internet Safety guidance for internet use in the home.
- All teaching staff are issued with Teaching Council Guidance in relation to the use of social media and electronic communications.
- Our Home School Teacher organises internet safety sessions for parents.
- The 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 personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's permission.
- Staff / Parents' / Pupils will treat others with respect at all times while online and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school or themselves into disrepute.

Filtering

“Filtering” is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult supervision. We believe that the advantages to pupils having access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration far exceed the disadvantages.

The school will use the internet provided and filtered by the Department of Education's National Broadband Programme. The Schools Broadband Programme provides an integrated set of services to schools which includes high quality broadband connectivity, content filtering, and security services including a centralised firewall, which helps protect school users, their data and infrastructure from inappropriate content and cyberattack.

Content filtering is an essential and integrated element of the broadband service that is provided to schools by the Schools Broadband Programme. The purpose of content filtering is to ensure that inappropriate websites and content are not accessible from within schools. Within the content filtering service provided, schools are given a choice of six different levels of content filtering so that they can choose a level that best meets their particular situation, age group of pupils etc. Schools can choose from these six levels, and the chosen level of content filtering is implemented by the Schools Broadband team for the school.

Content filtering systems classify websites into different 'categories' and these categories are used to control which category of website is allowed for schools on the different filtering levels. Level one is the most restrictive, while level six is the 'widest' level available as it allows access to websites such as YouTube, personal blogging and social networking. All six levels block access to inappropriate material in categories such as pornography, violence etc. Monastery NS is on level 5 filtration that allows appropriate and classified websites and access to YouTube. It does not allow access to social networking websites and personal blogging.

The access to websites from all school computers is monitored and regularly reviewed by the National Broadband Programme. Websites are only allowed through following a verification of their suitability and any websites that bypass this filtration can be reported to the filtration provider / National Broadband Service Desk and removed within 24 hours.

World Wide Web

- Pupils will use the internet for educational purposes and/or as deemed appropriate by the teacher. Pupils will seek permission before entering any internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher.
- Pupils and staff (including people employed by the school, volunteering or on placement) will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Teachers and pupils will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Pupils will be taught to never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- All internet users in Monastery NS should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored.
- Children should inform their teacher if they inadvertently access information that makes them in any way uncomfortable. In the unlikely event that this should happen, the children will be reassured and their parents will be notified. The offending URL will be noted and the service provider will be informed.
- If any user accesses material which is inappropriate, this should be reported to a teacher / a member of the in school management team. The principal will inform parents and report the matter to the schools' broadband programme service desk.

IPads/Chromebooks/laptops

- Pupils have access to a suite of iPads, Chromebooks and laptops in Monastery NS which can be used under the supervision of the teacher.
- Pupils should never leave their iPad/Chromebook/Laptop unattended while in use.
- Pupils should follow the teacher's instructions accessing only the applications to which the teacher has agreed.
- Pupils require permission before sending any form of electronic message.
- Audio or video footage recorded at school cannot be transmitted, broadcast or transferred without the teacher's permission.
- The camera and audio recording functions may only be used under the teachers' direction.
- Identity theft (pretending to be someone else) is in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy.
- In the event of a child accidentally accessing inappropriate material or images during a lesson, the pupil should immediately minimise the page and report the incident to the class teacher without attracting the attention of other pupils.
- iPad's /Chromebooks / Laptops must be always handled with care and correctly stored in the charging units at the end of the session/day.
- Any damage to the device must be reported immediately to the teacher.

Email

- Pupils will not use email facilities in school unless arranged by the class teacher for a specific purpose.
- The setting up of pupil emails will require the specific consent of Parents / Guardians. E.g. required for each pupil using Google Classroom.
- Pupils will be taught how to send and receive an email as a form of communication, i.e. as a writing genre.
- Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Pupils will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Pupils will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Parents and staff should only communicate through the official school email address, officeardeemns@gmail.com rather than teachers' work / personal email addresses or school virtual learning platforms such as Seesaw or Google Classroom.

Internet Chat

- Pupils will not have access to closed chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums in school.
- Websites that are categorized as personal, such as blogs and social networking are not accessible due to level 5 content filtering at source from the National Broadband Programme.

School Website: www.monasterynsardee.ie

- Pupils 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 website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated and screened by the uploading teacher and moderated by the principal / deputy principal / a member of the in school management team.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will avoid publishing the first name and last name of individuals together in a photograph.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use pupils' names in image file names or tags if published on the web.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Monastery NS Facebook Page - Rationale

The school's Facebook page will serve as a platform for celebrating school achievements, sharing updates, communicating important announcements, and engaging with the school community. It is intended to foster a positive and inclusive environment for parents, pupils, teachers and the wider community. The school's Facebook page is not intended to replace current modes of communication but will instead supplement these to ensure our communications reach as many in our school community as possible. The school's Facebook page will also ensure that the privacy and safety of pupils and staff is protected at all times.

Management of Monastery NS Facebook Page

- The responsibility for developing and updating the MNS Facebook page will be assigned to one administrator staff member who is a member of the in school management team (ISM). It will also be regularly reviewed by the Principal / Deputy Principal / other members of the ISM team.
- The Facebook App will be used on a mobile device exclusively used for the administration of the MNS Facebook Page. The device will not be used for any other purpose.
- The device will be the responsibility of the administrator and will be stored in the school at all times.
- Staff members who wish to have a post added to the Facebook page will send their photographs / updates to the designated mobile device. The administrator will then moderate and upload or reject the post.
- The moderator will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use pupils' names in image file names or tags when published on Facebook.
- Parents / Guardians will be encouraged to follow the MNS Facebook page and encourage others in the community to do so too.
- Monastery NS will seek the consent of parents or guardians to upload photographs / videos to the Monastery NS Facebook pages. This consent ensures that only images / videos of pupils whose families have approved the sharing of such content are featured on our social media platforms.

Social networking Protocols

- All posts on the Monastery NS Facebook Page will have "Comments Disabled".
- Users will be permitted to "Like" and "Share" posts to ensure they are viewed by a wide target audience.
- Users cannot advertise products or services on our school Facebook page.
- Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed as offensive, inappropriate or harmful.
- Users should not ask to become "friends" with staff members as failure to respond may cause offence.
- Users cannot tag or post photographs of children on the page.
- Users cannot add comments that can identify children
- To use Facebook, one must be 13 years of age or older. Therefore current pupils cannot be accepted as users.

The sanction for breaking these protocols is automatic removal from our Facebook page.

Personal Devices

- Pupils are not permitted to bring personal devices (smart watches/glasses etc. or any emerging recording technologies) to school that allow internet access, text messages or that are capable of recording or taking images, still or moving.
- We discourage pupils from bringing mobile phones to school unless absolutely necessary and arranged with the class teacher for a specific, valid reason.
- Phones must be switched off upon before entering the school grounds and remain off until pupils exit the school grounds. They will be stored by the teacher during the school day (N.B. phones are brought to school at the owner's risk and the teacher or school will not accept responsibility for any loss or damage which occurs throughout the day).
- Some pupils have an assistive technology device that they use in school and at home for educational purposes. All forms of assistive technology remain property of Monastery NS under the terms of Circular 0010/2013.

Remote Learning

- Monastery NS Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) such as Seesaw and Google Classroom are used exclusively for teaching and learning only. Parents / Guardians should communicate with our school in the normal way by email or phone call.
- In the event that remote learning takes place, parents, staff and pupils will follow school procedures and guidelines as outlined.
- Staff, families and pupils are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
- It is the duty of parents / guardians to supervise children while they are working online and to ensure that any content they submit to their teacher is appropriate.
- Staff members can communicate with pupils and their families via the Eolas App or through an established app (e.g., Seesaw, Google Classroom, and Google Meets).
- Pupils / staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and which parents have been notified of (Seesaw, Google Classroom, Google Meets).
- Parental permission will be required before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum.
- For video / Google Meets calls, parental permission will initially be sought. Links to any video calls will be communicated via the parent / guardian's email address.
- After the initial permission is granted by parents, permission to join any future calls is assumed by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call via their parent's email.
- Screen shots, Pictures or recordings of video calls are not permitted.
- Teacher communication using a mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.

Social Media

- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc is permitted in school with the expressed permission from teaching staff only.
- Parents / guardians, staff and pupils must not use the internet, social media or communication apps in school or at home to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, or other members of the school community.

- Parents/guardians, staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the school community on social media or communication apps. Similarly, it is asked that parents/guardians avoid negative conversations about children, staff or parents on social media accounts or communication apps. With this in mind, we ask that parents/guardians ensure that online messages and comments to teachers in the school are respectful and treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- School communications including notes, emails, school reports etc. are intended solely for the use of the intended recipients. They should not be distributed to others without the permission of the Principal and the Board of Management. The copying and/or posting of school communications on social networking sites and/or other media is strictly forbidden.
- Our School Facebook account will be used to positively promote our school, provide timely updates, photographs and videos of activities that happen in our school.
- Recording or taking images of school events such as Sports Day, Christmas plays etc. must be for personal family viewing only and must not be uploaded to the internet or distributed on social media or in any other way.

The following should also be noted:

- The school will continue to use the Eolas App for the circulation of essential school information.
- The school website will continue to provide a wide range of information for our school community relating to school life.
- Parents / Guardians will have the option to opt in or out of permitting their child's image being posted.
- Social media pages will be public and as such will be open to others to view.
- Pupil's first names and surnames will not be included together and children will only be referred to in a group. Individual photographs may occasionally be posted when a child has received an individual award, prize etc.
- Many of the photographs will be of group activities, such as class activities, classroom project work, sporting events and other events where groups of children are learning or having fun.
- Comments will be turned off. In the event of a comment appearing on a post, the moderator may delete/remove it without the permission of the author.
- Parents will be informed not to use social media pages to contact the school regarding their child's educational or wellbeing, but rather follow normal procedures by contacting the school office and arranging a phone call or face to face meeting.

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, pupils and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- 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 parents / guardians of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet. This information will be available on our school website and at Internet Safety talks organised by our HSCL.

Education and Internet Awareness

Teachers will educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet. Cyber-bullying has become a significant threat for young people. Through education and awareness, we aim to limit our children's susceptibility to it and equip them with the skills and knowledge to safely navigate the internet and online world. There are a number of websites offering support and advice in the area of internet safety.

The following is a selection:

1. [Webwise - http://www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)
2. <https://better-internet-for-kids.europa.eu/ww/en/pub/insafe/>

Sanctions

If a pupil deliberately misuses the internet or email, is found running searches on inappropriate topics or attempting to access inappropriate/unsuitable websites, this will result in sanctions as per *MNS Code of Behaviour*, including the withdrawal of access privileges. Parents/Guardians will receive notification of internet misuse by a pupil. Misuse of the internet may result in sanctions in accordance with the school's *Code of Behaviour* and/or the school's *Anti Bullying Policy* and/or the school's *Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment*.

Sanctions in our *Code of Behaviour* include written warnings, notification of parents, 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.

*Please refer to our school's *Code of Behaviour / Anti-bullying Policy / Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment* for further information.

Principal: *Jim McGee*

Chairperson: *Michael McCoy*

Date: 22/10/2024