Acceptable Usage Policy

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of C.E.I ST. (Catholic Schools, An Irish Schools Trust). The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills, and is a co-educational school.

School Management: The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School is a statutory Board, appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport operates as a Catholic Co-educational Secondary School, to provide teaching and learning of the highest quality for the benefit of the community which it serves.

In pursuing this mission we aim:

To provide a quality educational experience that caters for the full range of academic aptitude and abilities.

To foster the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, moral and religious development of our students.

To enable pupils to achieve their full potential academically.

To promote the Catholic ethos and faith.

To cater for the needs of the local community in so far as ethos, resources and facilities permit.

Ethos: As a CEIST school, St. Mary's seeks to promote the five key elements of the CEIST charter.

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning.
- Showing Respect for Every Person.
- Creating Community.
- Being Just and Responsible

Introduction

This Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to all students who have access to, and are users of, the Internet in St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport, Co. Tipperary. It also applies to all members of staff, volunteers, parents/guardians and all others who access the Internet in St. Mary's Secondary School.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement, and in line with the Children First Act, 2015, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017 and General Data Protection Regulation, 2018.

The school's Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mr. Kevin Cusack (Principal), and the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) is Mr. Danny O'Callaghan (Deputy Principal).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policies on Anti-Bullying, Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Statement, GDPR, Remote Learning, Mobile Phone Usage, I.C.T., and Ipad Usage guidelines.

Rationale

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to promote good practice and safe, responsible use of aspects of the Internet. Internet use and access is considered a valuable school resource, and privilege. If the Acceptable Use Policy of St. Mary's Secondary School is not adhered to, this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

The main goals of this policy are:

-To ensure that the students of St. Mary's benefit, in a safe and effective manner, from the learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources

-To define the parameters of behaviour, and to specify the consequences of violating those parameters

 -To identify the school strategy on promoting the safe use of the Internet, and to address the risks associated with its use.

General information

When using the Internet in St. Mary's Secondary school, all users are expected to:

- treat everybody with respect at all times
- respect the right to privacy of all members of our school community
- not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute
- report misuse of the Internet to the appropriate teacher and/or the principal.

Although the school takes active steps to promote safe use of the Internet, the primary educators of a child are their parents/guardians. As such, it is imperative that our students' education regarding safe Internet usage begins in the home. There are many useful websites to help parents in this regard, such as www.webwise.ie, www.connectsafely.org, www.safewise.com to name but a few.

For students, misuse of the Internet may result in sanctions and/or disciplinary action including, among others: verbal warning, written warning, withdrawal of privileges, detention, suspension or expulsion.

When the Internet is misused by staff, established disciplinary procedures will be implemented.

Misuse by other persons will be dealt with on an individual basis.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport takes no responsibility for stolen, lost or damages devices. Likewise, the school takes no responsibility for lost/corrupted data on devices. All users are advised to regularly back up data.

St. Mary's Secondary School will consider all Internet related incidents which occur outside the school, when they impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy, and under associated policies. In such cases, St. Mary's secondary School will inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behavior that take place outside of school, and impose the appropriate sanctions.

St. Mary's Secondary School implements the following **strategies** to promote safe use of the Internet, to maximize learning opportunities and to reduce risk associated with the Internet.

i.   Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to students in St. Mary's Secondary School, especially through S.P.H.E., C.S.P.E., I.C.T. and Tutor classes

ii.   Teachers are afforded the opportunity, and notified of, Continuous Professional Development. In addition to this, all registered teachers have been issued with An Chomhairle Mhúinteoireachta/The teaching Council's Code of Behaviour, and Guidance for Registered Teachers about the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication.

iii.   Students must not access the Internet unless under the supervision of a teacher

iv.   St. Mary's Secondary School has a filtering system in place, applied by NCTE Schools Broadband Service. This filtering software is used by the school in order to minimize the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.

Students, staff and all Internet users in St. Mary's Secondary School are expected to abide by the following Internet access guidelines.

Web browsing & downloading
- All users will use the school's Internet connection only for educational and career development activities.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to the teacher, and the teacher will report it to senior management, if appropriate.
- Students may not download software, nor change the settings on the school's network or on school devices.
- Users must not intentionally search for, view, share or download any Internet sites that contain illegal, obscene, defamatory, racist, hateful or otherwise objectionable material.
- Users must not search for, view, share or download any material that is intended to harass, bully, intimidate or embarrass another person.
- Users are expected to respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content.

Emailing & messaging

Email is an integral part of the communication system within St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport. All students and teachers of the school are issued with a personal St. Mary's Secondary School email account.

- Students must not, under any circumstances, share their email account login details with other students.
- Students must not use school email accounts to register for online services, such as social networking services, apps, games etc.
- Students, and other users, must not send material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, racist, hateful or otherwise objectionable, or any material that is intended to harass, bully, intimidate or embarrass another person.
- Students must immediately report to their teacher the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature. They should not respond to any such communication.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- School email accounts are suspended within 6 months of the user leaving the school. Students and teachers are therefore advised to transfer material, if they so wish, in a timely manner.

Social media

The use of instant messaging services and apps, blogs and video streaming sites, such as Youtube, is allowed with teacher permission. Staff and students may not use social media and the Internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame. 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 that might bring St. Mary's into disrepute. Staff and students must not represent their personal views as those of St. Mary's Secondary School on any social medium.

Personal devices

Students using their own technology in school must follow the rules set out in this policy, in the same way as if they were using school equipment. Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during classes, with the express permission and guidance of the teacher. Personal ipads must be reconfigured through the apple school management system. When used in class, ipads must be flat on the desk. Please refer to our guidelines for ipad usage.

Photographic & Video images
Students or staff must not participate in activities that might bring either the individual or the school into disrepute. Taking photos or videos on the school grounds, or when participating in school activities is allowed, once care is taken that no harm is caused or intended. Students must not share content on line with the intention to harm, embarrass, bully or intimidate another member of the school community, regardless of whether this happens within school or without.

School website and school social media platforms
St. Mary's Secondary School website, and St. Mary's Secondary School social media platforms operate under the authority of the Board of Management, and they are managed by a member of the school staff on behalf of the school. These platforms will only publish video/photos with the consent of parents/guardians. This consent is obtained on enrolment.

Cyberbullying
The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the Anti-bullying Policy of St. Mary's Secondary School, Newport.
When using the Internet, students and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times. Engaging in online activities, with the intention to harm, harass, bully or embarrass is absolutely unacceptable and prohibited, and carries serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Supporting Teaching and Learning Online
Arising from Public Health Emergency 2020, Circular Letter 0074/2020 requires all schools have in place a communication and learning platform, which supports schools to respond, in the event of a partial or full school closure. The platform used in St. Mary's Secondary School is google classroom. Please refer to the Remote Learning policy for guidelines.

Timetable for Review

The Acceptable Usage Policy will be reviewed as the need arises, and/or every three years. The next review is scheduled to take place in 2024.

Policy development team:

Mr. K. Cusack, Ms. E Mullally, Ms. O. Thornton, Ms. J. Moore, Mr. S. Kennedy

Relevant dates for this policy

Draft policy presented to Senior Management Team: 20th April, 2021

Draft policy presented to Students Council: 21st April, 2021

Draft policy sent to Parents' Council: 10th May, 2021

Draft policy presented to Staff: 11th May, 2021

Draft policy presented to Board of Management: 12th May, 2021

Policy ratified by Board of Management: 12th May, 2021

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____