



***The Sacred Heart Secondary School,  
Drogheda***

***ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY***

***2021/2022***

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## ICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

### 1. School Details:

Sacred Heart Secondary School is an all girls, voluntary secondary school with an enrolment of 687 students and 50 staff members. All classrooms are fitted out with the required technology to enable students and staff to access the internet for educational purposes.

### 2. School Vision:

At the Sacred Heart Secondary School our vision is quality education in a secure, caring, environment. In our school, all our students are cherished equally and assisted in their efforts to achieve their academic and personal goals. The spiritual and moral development of students is a matter of paramount importance at Sacred Heart School. We strive to develop in each pupil a sense of pride, courage, initiative and responsibility.

### Vision for Digital Technologies:

- In line with the guidance provided by the PDST Technology in Education, the approach in Sacred Heart Secondary School is to emphasise the integration of digital learning across the curriculum, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Our aim is that technology can be a tool which can add value to the teaching and learning process when it is used appropriately. The purpose of computer literacy is the same as all teaching and learning, to awaken and to support the development of intellectual curiosity.
- Sacred Heart Secondary School aims to integrate technology into the student experience and foster an environment of support and innovation. Our hope is that students will leave our school as confident, creative and productive users of new technologies, including ICT, and understand the impact of those technologies on society.
- Our vision for digital learning in the Sacred Heart Secondary School, centers on a balanced approach – ensuring that digital technologies are integrated into lessons, when appropriate, and used only to enhance the pupil's learning experience. We also aim to ensure that our students begin to develop a critical appreciation of the role of digital technologies in society and develop habits which reflect an ethical and responsible use of these technologies.

### 3. Rationale:

An Acceptable Use Policy is an important document which governs students' use of the internet and covers a wide range of issues surrounding the rights, responsibilities and privileges as well as sanctions connected with computer use.

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's ICT and Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students, members of staff, volunteers, parents/ guardians and others who access the Internet in Sacred Heart Secondary School.

The AUP policy has been developed by the digital learning team. The Board of Management, teaching staff, management, support staff, students, and parents/ guardian are involved in reviewing the



policy. It is envisaged that the school stakeholders will review the AUP annually. This version of the AUP was updated in Feb 2022. Stakeholders will monitor the impact of the policy and report to the digital learning committee who will update the policy accordingly.

#### **4. School Strategy:**

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's ICT resources in a safe and effective manner.

The school continues to develop and expand its ICT resources to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The ongoing development is facilitated by grants received from the Department of Education grants and school funds. The school employs strategies to use ICT in order to maximise learning opportunities while being cognisant of the risks associated with the use of the internet.

When using the ICT resources and internet, students and staff are expected to:

- Always treat others with respect.
- Refrain from undertaking 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.
- Adhere to all GDPR guidelines as outlined in our data protection policy, available on the school website

Student misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in some cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Sacred Heart Secondary School may be required to deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy. In such cases the school will liaise with parents/ guardians regarding this inappropriate online behaviour and may be required to impose appropriate sanctions.

Sacred Heart Secondary 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, CSPE curriculum and wellbeing programme.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to students in Sacred Heart Secondary School through our induction, pastoral care, and peer mentoring programmes. It is a work in progress so as more initiatives are developed, they can be added in.
- Sacred Heart Secondary School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

#### **5. Internet Usage Protocols**

##### **5.1 General approach**



- Management and staff will monitor the implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy.
- A teacher will always supervise Internet use in class.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- The school email account issued to students and staff should only be used for educational purposes only.
- Uploading/downloading and installation of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software is used and updated on a regular basis.
- Cloud based storage is the main method for storing work. Memory keys are only used in exceptional cases with permission from the teacher.
- 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.
- When using our learning platform i.e. Teams, teachers will use the required settings to minimise risk of access to uninvited guests.
- Students, staff must not share links to meets unless prior permission is obtained.
- Should serious online safety incidents take place, the Yearhead, Principal and Deputy Principal should be informed.

## **5.2 Content Filtering**

Sacred Heart Secondary School implements content filtering level 4 on the Schools Broadband Network:

Level 4 allows access to millions of websites including 'YouTube', and 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, suspension or expulsion. This is an extremely serious breach of our AUP.

## **5.3 Web Browsing and Downloading**

- Students must not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials and must not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person.
- Students must report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the school to their teacher.
- Students and staff must not copy information from the Internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content. Students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning. (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- 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.
- Students should only use the school’s Internet connection only for educational activities.



- Students must not 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. Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed and is a breach of the AUP.
- Students should never disclose or publicise personal information about themselves or others.

#### **5.4 Email/Internet Communication**

- Students are provided with an Office 365 email in first year. This email address must be used for all school related communication and must not be used for outside school communication. The use of personal email accounts is not permitted.
- Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with any other person.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
- Students must not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy, harass or intimidate another person.
- Students should immediately report to their 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.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Students should not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy, harass, or intimidate another person.
- Students must not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students must never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they have only met through communicating on emails, social media or the Internet.
- Students will never have access to chat rooms outside of breakout rooms in MS Teams.

#### **5.5 School Communication Platforms: Website- Facebook - Instagram.**

- Students projects, artwork or schoolwork may be published on the school communication platforms upon receipt of permission from a student. The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Parents/guardians permission is sought to use their daughter's work and/or photographs of students on the school's promotional material including school website, school Facebook page, Instagram, print media, digital and other social media when they are registering their daughter in the school (See Admissions Policy).
- Parental/ guardian permission is also sought to use digital photographs/videos of both individual and groups participating in school activities/ events, school musical, trips, community school events which are published on the school website/Facebook/Twitter/ Instagram.
- The website is regularly monitored to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of students or staff.

## 5.6 Images & Video

- Sacred Heart 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 are only allowed with expressed permission from staff.**
- **The unauthorized capture of images, video, audio or taking photos on a school iPad or personal device in school, unless requested to do so by a teacher as part of schoolwork is deemed to be a serious breach of conduct and will be dealt with in accordance with the code of behavior.**
- **Students must not share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm, upset, harass, intimidate another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.**
- Sharing explicit images is unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

## 5.7 Cyber bullying

- When using the Internet students, parents/guardians and staff are expected to always expected to treat others with respect.
- Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, intimate 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 Sacred Heart Secondary School to ensure that staff and students are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school premises or the school day.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, while not falling under the definition of bullying will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.
- The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

## 5.8 Personal Devices:

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

The following statements apply to the use of personal internet-enabled devices for example, mobile phones, tablets, gaming devices, digital music players and smart watches

- Students are allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into the Sacred Heart Secondary School. It is the student's responsibility to look after their device.
- Students must ensure their device is switched off for the duration of the school day. Devices in 'Silent' or 'Vibrate' mode are not considered 'off'.
- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with expressed permission from teaching staff.
- Students are to follow specific instructions from teaching staff when using personal internet-enabled devices such as phones/tables.



- Devices are to be left flat face-up on the desk when in use.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lunch/break. They must be turned off prior to walking into the school building. They may only be turned on with the permission from a teacher. Students must turn phones off after the task is complete.
- The “use” of such devices includes but is not limited to: transmission or reception of text/picture/audio/video messages for educational purposes.
- Connecting or attempting to connect to the school’s network system (wired or wireless) without authorisation is a breach of the AUP.
- Any misuse of personal devices as outlined above will result in the confiscation of the device in line with the code of behaviour.

### **5.9 Social Media**

- The use of instant messaging services such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, GChat, TikTok etc. is not allowed in the Sacred Heart Secondary School unless prior permission is granted by a staff member. Its use must be solely for educational purposes.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumbler etc. is not allowed in Sacred Heart Secondary School unless prior permission is granted by a staff member. Its use must be solely for educational purposes.
- Staff, students and/or parent(s)/Guardian(s) must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, staff, the school or other members of the Sacred Heart School community
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of the Sacred Heart School community on social media platforms.
- Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff, students and/or parent (s)/ guardian(s) must not engage in activities involving social media, which might bring Sacred Heart Secondary School into disrepute.
- Staff and students must not represent their personal views as being those of the school on any social media platform.

### **5.10 Protocol for Remote Teaching & Learning**

In the event of school closure directed by the Department of Education and Skills, students may be required to access teaching and learning online. MS Teams or other platforms may be used for this purpose. Please refer to the protocol for blended learning if and when required. Breaches of the protocol will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

## **6. Legislation**

Stakeholders should be familiar with legislation pertaining to the use of the Internet to include the following:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998
- Interception Act 1933
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- Data Protection Act 1998

## **7. Other policies related to the AUP:**





- Code of Behaviour
- Admissions Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- School Tour Policy
- Dignity in the workplace
- Social Media Usage
- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection Policy

*This list is not exhaustive*

## **8. Support Structures**

A member of the school community who is affected by inappropriate use of the internet personally or by a third party will be guided towards key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

The pastoral care system in the school supports all matters been dealt with under the AUP.

The Sacred Heart Secondary School has adopted the Child Protection Procedures for Post Primary Schools as part of its child protection policy. This policy has been made available to the Parents' Council and is available to all parents/ guardians on request from the school office and or on our website.

DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DLP) Ms. Leoni Carroll (Principal)

DEPUTY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON (DDL) Ms. Deirdre Lynch (Deputy Principal)

## **9. Sanctions**

Breach of the AUP will result in disciplinary action to include and up to expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

## **Approval**

This policy has been approved by Sacred Heart School, Drogheda, Board of Management.

Signed: *Gerry Mc Guill*

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: *Leoni Carroll*

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Principal



