

Mayo Abbey NS - Acceptable Usage Policy for Internet Use (incl. Mobile Phone/Devices)

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.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. Before enrolling, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the AUP unless the school is specifically notified.

The first version of the AUP was created on 20th October 2008 by principal and the school teaching staff. It was revised to take account of new technologies and social media in October 2013 and it further updated in March 2018 to incorporate mobile device use. This current AUP was reviewed and updated in March 2020. In 2021, it was further updated to include distance learning.

The purpose of Internet use in school is to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management information and business administration systems.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the teaching staff and Principal should be informed.

School's Strategy

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:

General

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software from the Schools' Broadband Service is used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- 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.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

World Wide Web

- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Pupils taking steps to by-pass the content filter may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only during class time. Aimless surfing is not allowed. Pupils will use the Internet in response to an articulated need – e.g. a question arising from work in class. Children should be able to answer the question "Why are we using the Internet?"

- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students 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.

Email / Internet Chat

- Students will not be given access to email. However, they will be provided with Google credentials for accessing other communication tools such as Google Classroom.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students will not have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication fora.

Internet / Social Media

The Internet has become a two-way communication system for the school and the wider community. Services such as YouTube, Class Dojo, SeeSaw, Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, Google Classroom and other social media may be used by the school to communicate with parents and also for parents to communicate with the school. These services, although not owned by Mayo Abbey National 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 (and Parent's Association) Facebook account follows the same safety rules, e.g. the showing of photographs, video, etc.

The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents. Web 2.0 is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately. We would ask:

- 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. Social media sites may be used by teachers in class, for example, Twitter. However, all interactions will be under the supervision of the teacher. Children will not be allowed to use their own personal accounts for social media.
- Please do not "tag" photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.
- If you are uploading a photograph, please ensure that it does not identify the child in any way. Please make sure photograph size is kept as small as possible.
- Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages written on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- Avoid any negative conversations about children, staff or parents on social media accounts. If you have an issue with something in the school, social media is not the place to raise it. Comments of this nature will be deleted.
- Please do not add advertisements to our wall without prior permission of the principal.
- Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban to our social media accounts.

School Website

- Please note that the following points apply to the school's web site and social media profiles, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube.
- 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 co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Photographs, audio and video clips will be used. Video clips will not be password protected.
- 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 in a photograph.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use pupils' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Direct Communication using Internet

Teachers in the school may choose to use a number of tools for classroom communication. Examples include Google Classroom, Webex, Zoom, SeeSaw, and ClassDojo. Some of these tools provide synchronous video opportunities whereby a staff member directly speaks to the children live - e.g. through a webinar or online meeting. The staff member invites pupils and their families to these meetings using a code. The following are ground rules for synchronous lessons online.

- All meetings will be password protected
- All people involved in the meeting will conduct themselves in a similar manner that would be expected in a regular class.
- The staff member has the right to "kick out" any person being disruptive from a synchronous lesson.
- A family member is expected to be close by when a pupil is engaging in a meeting. They should monitor all online interactions from the pupil.
- Staff will not meet any child alone using an online meeting. If there is a need for a meeting between a child with a staff member, another adult must be present at the meeting and/or the meeting must be recorded.
- While chat may be available in an online meeting, it is the responsibility of the child's family to ensure that any interaction is appropriate. Any interaction from a pupil that could be deemed as inappropriate may result in the child's removal from the lesson or, where appropriate, a referral to Child Protection services.

Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

The possession and use of mobile phones, tablets and other devices by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Use of mobile devices (particularly with the advent of increasingly sophisticated equipment and camera phones) presents a number of opportunities as well as challenges, including:

- Mobile Devices can provide interesting and effective learning opportunities as more and more individualised educational programs come on stream. The ability to share work to a wider audience also brings great value.

- Mobile Devices can be valuable items and might render a pupil vulnerable to theft.
- The use of mobiles devices could be potentially undermining of classroom management, e.g. videoing staff, etc.
- Use of devices with integrated cameras could lead to cyberbullying, child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of content.

The school's Board of Management accepts that it is not realistic to have a policy which prohibits pupils from bringing devices to school. Not only would it be impractical to forbid pupils from carrying them, but it is believed that a number of parents would be concerned for health and safety reasons if their child were not allowed to carry a phone at all (and might therefore be unable to contact their parents in respect of any situation that might arise after school.)

However, it is the Board's policy to prohibit the unauthorised use by pupils of mobile phones while on school premises, grounds or off site activities e.g. school swimming. The Board discourages (and asks all parents to discourage) pupils from bringing mobile phones to schools on the grounds that they are valuable and may be lost or stolen.

There are a number of different users of the school building, including students, staff, families and tenants (groups that rent the building). The following information outlines the policy regarding each of these groups.

a. Pupils

Pupils are not to bring mobile phones to school without prior permission from the principal. This policy also applies to children participating in after school classes and activities.

If a pupil is found to have an unauthorised device either on them, or in their school bag etc. between the hours of 9:20am and 3:00pm **the device will be confiscated and kept until a parent/guardian comes and collects the device**. Unauthorised phones will be confiscated and returned only to parents /guardians. The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones. The safety and security of devices is a matter for pupils and their families.

Pupils must never take photographs or video on their personal mobile device. Any footage that is taken must be surrendered on request. This footage will either be deleted or, if applicable, be brought to the attention of the relevant authorities. The school incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy and will treat breaches as they would treat any other breach of the Code.

b. Staff

Staff members do not give out their phone number or that of any other staff member to pupils or parents/guardians. Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with children, it is vital that staff be engaged with children at all working times. Staff are trusted to use their phones accordingly.

Work Calls; Calls to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is required, appointments should be made to meet parents. Calls to other professionals and organisations should be made in consultation with the Principal and classroom supervision will be arranged where appropriate.

Personal Calls; In general, personal calls should be carried out outside of teaching time. In cases of urgency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls and ensure that their classroom is supervised during the call. Incoming personal calls should be reserved for urgent matters.

In terms of data, staff are also advised to use any mobile devices responsibly. Staff may use their devices to record any school-related work if they wish. However, the school cannot take any responsibility for these recordings. Staff are trusted that they will use these recordings responsibly for school-related activities, e.g. on the school website.

Staff should also note that no unauthorised recordings of school business must take place. This includes all meetings and events. If a meeting needs to be recorded for any reason, all participants must agree to the recording before it can take place. Any unauthorised recordings of meetings will be dealt with as a breach of disciplinary procedures.

c. Parents, Guardians, Visitors and Others

Adults using the school are reminded that the school has little to no phone reception. Making phone calls while on the premises should ensure that they do not distract any classes.

Adults must ensure that all content that they access is appropriate and in line with the ethos of our school. All internet data is logged and, if necessary, it may be used to report to relevant authorities.

Adults are also reminded that they must not use devices to record audio, images or video unless specifically permitted by the school. Any meetings with staff should not be recorded without the permission of the staff member. Visitors must also be vigilant in terms of child protection with regards to recording children in the school. Visitors must ensure that they never share any media of children in school online, including their own social media profiles unless expressly permitted by the school and anyone appearing in the media.

Newspapers and media organisations are permitted to take photographs, audio and video of children for their respective organisations. However, if there are children opted out from appearing in the media they cannot be recorded.

Legislation

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

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Support Structures

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

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, 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.

Review and Evaluation

This Acceptable Use Policy was reviewed by the principal and staff and approved by the Board of Management of Mayo Abbey N.S. on _____ (date).

Chairperson of the Board of Management _____

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Scoil Náisiúnta Mhainistir Mhaigh Eo.
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Claremorris, Co. Mayo
Tel. 094 9365644
***email:* mayoabbeyns@yahoo.com**
***website:* www.mayoabbeyns.com**

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy, and sign and return this permission form to the Principal.

Name of Student: _____

Class/Year: _____

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

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Address: _____

Date: _____