



St. Bernadette's Special School Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources, and will be protected from harmful and illegal use of the Internet.

St. Bernadette's Special School will employ a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Education
- Filtering/Monitoring

Pupil Access to the Internet

The school is pleased to offer the internet as an available resource to both pupils and teachers for reference purposes, researching project materials, playing interactive educational games, learning to touch-type and for lesson reinforcement. Access to online resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation for living and working in this information age. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum, and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources, as outlined in this policy. Pupils' use of telecommunications and electronic information will be taught and provided for from Primary 1 through to Senior 2 and will only be permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and pupils themselves.

1. Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher supervision
2. Internet will be used for educational purposes only
3. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher
4. Pupils will seek permission before entering any Internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher
5. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
6. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage
7. Pupils will receive training in the area of internet safety
8. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites
9. Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues
10. Uploading and downloading of non-approved material is banned
11. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis

12. The use of personal USB's, external storage devices or CD-ROMS in school requires a teacher's permission
13. Pupils will observe good 'netiquette' (etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring a school into disrepute
14. 'YouTube' (and similar sites) can be accessed only under the supervision and direction of the teacher.

Email

If pupils are allowed to use email, the following rules will apply:

Email / Internet Chat:

1. Students and staff will be provided with Google credentials for accessing communication tools such as GSuite.
2. Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
3. Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as passwords, addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
4. Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know online. Students will note that sending and receiving files is subject to permission from their teacher.
5. Students will not have access to email, social media, chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication for a unless under the supervision of the teacher.

Internet Chat

Students are not permitted to use internet chat rooms.

School Website

Pupils may create projects, artwork, writing or audio-visual recordings which would be suitable for publication on our school's website. Designated teachers will manage the publication of material on the school website adhering to the stipulations below.

1. Personal pupil information, home addresses and contact details will not be published on the school website
2. Class lists will not be published
3. Pupils' full names will not be published beside their photograph
4. Digital photographs, video clips and audio clips will focus on groups and group activities rather than on individual pupils when possible
5. Pupils will be given an opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website
6. Teachers will select work to be published and decide on the appropriateness of such
7. Permission to publish a student's work will be sought from pupils/parents/ guardians. This permission may be withdrawn at any time
8. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Education and Internet Awareness

Internet:

The Internet has become a two way communication system for the school and the wider community. Services such as YouTube, Text-A-Parent, ClassDojo, SeeSaw, Facebook and other social media are being used by the school to communicate with parents and also for parents to communicate with the school. These services, although not owned by St. Bernadette's Special School, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services falls under this policy. Please refer to the school's Data Protection Policy for further information on how the school utilises 3rd party services. The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents:

- The Internet is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately. St. Bernadette's Special School will undertake an education programme to educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet.
- Cyber-bullying has become a significant threat for teenagers. Through education and awareness, we aim to limit our children's susceptibility to it as they progress to our Senior School.
- 21st century life presents dangers including violence, racism and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. At the same time, they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become internet wise.

Resources that may be used to implement this programme include:

- NCTE Internet Safety Awareness Video
- Use of the 'Kids' section on the www.webwise.ie website
- SAFT Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme and exemplars

- 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.
- Many social media sites will be used by teachers in class, for example, Youtube. 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 (no bigger than 1200 pixels)
- 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 request to "friend" a member of staff in the school. Most staff would like to keep their personal lives personal. It may be awkward for a staff member to be asked to ignore a Facebook or other social network request.
- Please do not add advertisements to our social media account without prior permission of the principal.

- Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban to our social media accounts.

Filtering

The school will use the Internet provided and filtered by the NCTE (National Centre for Technology). ‘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. St. Bernadette’s Special School also uses additional filtering software on all our machines, which, while not foolproof, thus filtering pupils’ access to the internet further. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance. At St. Bernadette’s Special School, we believe that the advantages to pupils having access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration far exceed the risk of disadvantages.

The access to websites from all school computers is monitored and regularly reviewed by the NCTE. Websites are only allowed through following a verification of their suitability.

Many browsers have their own built in filtering tool e.g. Google. Google’s search engine has a built-in “Safe Search”. This filter eliminates sites that contain pornography and explicit sexual content from search results. It is easily applied by clicking on the **Preferences** link on any Google page. Unfortunately it is also easily removed.

Windows XP has a built-in firewall. Firewall software can be purchased or downloaded free from the Internet. St. Bernadette’s Special School has installed firewall software.

Laptops

Every site that is accessed within the school network or by a school machine is monitored and reports of all access are sent to the management team on a weekly basis. Teachers check computer logs of all information accessed by pupils. An audit of internet usage may be run at any time.

Use of laptops that travel between home and school are subject to all stipulations, procedures and sanctions outlined in this policy 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Parents of children who have been sanctioned laptops are instructed to be vigilant in monitoring their use in the home, as per procedures for school. Parents of all children are advised to keep laptops in a common area (i.e. kitchen or living room) with the screen visible to others while a child may be on the internet. The use of laptops by children in their bedrooms is not recommended.

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, YouTube and Google+

- 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 and the school's social media.
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips of 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 full 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.

Personal Devices

Please see mobile device policy for further information.

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
- Children First 2018
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988 Support Structure

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

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 disciplinary action, including the withdrawal of access privileges. Parents/guardians will receive notification of misuse by a pupil. Further misuse will result in longer withdrawal of access privileges, as seen fit by the school staff. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal action or activities to the appropriate authorities.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Secretary/Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Responsible Internet Use - Pupil Undertaking

We use the School computers and Internet connection for learning. These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site
- I will not bring external storage devices such as pen drives (or memory sticks/USB keys etc) into school without permission
- I will not use email for personal reasons
- I will only use email for school projects and with my teacher's permission
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible
- When sending email, I will not give my home address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone
- I will ask for permission before opening an email or an email attachment
- I will not use internet chat rooms
- If I see anything I am unhappy with, or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the sites I visit
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed.

Signed: _____ Pupil(s)

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

Internet Permission Form

Name of Pupil(s): _____

Class(es): _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above child, I have read the Internet Acceptable

Use Policy and grant permission for

_____ (name(s): son/daughter) to access the Internet. I understand that school internet usage is for educational purposes only and that every reasonable precaution will be taken by the school to provide for online safety.

I accept my own responsibility for the education of my child(ren) on issues of Internet Responsibility and Safety.

I understand that having adhered to all the enclosed precautions the school cannot be held responsible if my child tries to access unsuitable material.

Signature: 1. _____ 2. _____

Parents/Legal Guardians

Date: _____



School Website

I understand that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the school's website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Usage Policy in relation to publishing pupils' work and photographs of school activities on the website.

Signature: 1. _____ 2. _____

Parents/Legal Guardians

Date: _____