

Scoil Mhuire agus Bharra

Summerhill

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Principal: Mr. Cathal McCarthy



Acceptable Use Policy

1. Rationale

Digital technology is an integral part of teaching, learning, communication and administration in Scoil Mhuire agus Bharra. Internet access, cloud platforms, digital devices, online resources, photographs, video and emerging technologies form part of normal school life.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all technology is used:

- Safely
- Ethically
- Legally
- In a way that protects the dignity, privacy and wellbeing of pupils and staff
- In a way that enhances teaching and learning

This policy operates alongside the Child Safeguarding Statement, Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour and Data Protection Policy (GDPR).

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All pupils
- All staff
- All school-owned devices
- All digital platforms used by the school (e.g. Aladdin, school email, cloud storage, learning platforms)
- Any online behaviour outside school that impacts on pupils or staff

3. Digital Infrastructure in the School

Pupils access the internet only through:

- School Chromebooks, iPads and PCs
- Department of Education filtered broadband (Level 4)
- Direct teacher supervision

Pupils do not use personal devices in school.

4. Educational Use of the Internet

The internet is used to support:

- Research and project work
- Literacy, numeracy and curriculum delivery
- Multimedia and interactive learning
- Educational videos and online resources
- Communication through approved school systems

Pupils are explicitly taught digital citizenship and online safety through SPHE and across the curriculum.

5. Supervision, Filtering and Monitoring

The school:

- Operates Level 4 content filtering
- Ensures pupils are supervised when online
- May review browsing history where concerns arise
- Treats attempts to bypass filtering as a serious breach

6. Communication, Email and Digital Platforms

Pupils

Pupils:

- Do not use personal email accounts in school
- Do not register for apps, games or online services
- Use digital tools only under teacher direction

Staff

Staff:

- Use Aladdin as the formal communication platform with parents
- Do not communicate with pupils or parents through personal email or social media

7. Social Media and Online Conduct

No member of the school community may use social media to:

- Breach confidentiality
- Damage the reputation of the school

8. Mobile Phones, Smartwatches and Personal Smart Devices (Pupils)

Scoil Mhuire agus Bharra operates a strict **no-device policy** for pupils as a safeguarding, privacy and wellbeing measure.

This applies to:

- Mobile phones and smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Tablets
- Gaming devices
- Smart glasses
- Any device capable of calling, messaging, recording, photographing or internet access

General Rule

Pupils are not permitted to bring these devices to school.

Standard analogue or digital watches without smart features are allowed.

Exceptional Circumstances

Where essential communication is required before/after school:

- The phone must be switched off before entering school grounds
- The phone must be handed into the office each morning and collected at home time
- The phone may not be accessed during the school day

Breaches of these rules are dealt with in line with the school's Code of Behaviour

Absolute Ban on Smartwatches

Smartwatches and wearable technology are strictly forbidden due to their recording and messaging capabilities.

Communication During the School Day

All communication between pupils and home goes through the school office.

School Tours and Activities

Devices are not permitted on tours, matches or activities.

Breaches

Breaches result in:

- Immediate confiscation
- Return only to parent/guardian
- Sanctions under the Code of Behaviour

The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to devices brought to school.

9. Photographs, Audio and Video

Photographs and video recordings are a normal and positive part of school life including sports events, concerts, assemblies, classroom activities and celebrations.

Parental permission for the taking and sharing of photographs is sought annually through the school's Aladdin system. The school will only use images of pupils in accordance with the permissions provided by parents/guardians.

Therefore:

- Staff may take photos/videos for educational and communication purposes
- Staff are encouraged to take photographs using school devices, such as iPads. If photographs are taken on a personal device, they must be transferred to a school device as soon as possible and then deleted immediately from the personal device
- Images may be shared on Aladdin, the school website, Facebook and displays, in line with parental permissions
- Images focus on group activities where possible
- No surnames are published with images

10. Cyberbullying and Harmful Online Behaviour

Online behaviour that affects pupils or staff is addressed under:

- Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Code of Behaviour

11. Prohibited Activities

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Accessing inappropriate or illegal content
- Attempting to bypass filters
- Online gaming, gambling or shopping
- Downloading non-educational materials
- Sharing personal information
- Recording others
- Any activity threatening safety, wellbeing or reputation

12. School Website and Online Publication

The website:

- Does not publish personal data
- Uses group-focused images
- Avoids full names with photos
- May publish pupil work

13. Legal and Child Protection Framework

This policy operates under:

- GDPR & Data Protection Acts
- Children First Act
- Coco's Law
- Relevant criminal legislation
- Teaching Council guidance

Serious breaches may be referred to the DLP and/or An Garda Síochána.

14.. Sanctions

Breaches are dealt with under:

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding procedures where appropriate

15. Oversight and Review

The Principal oversees implementation.

The Board of Management reviews this policy annually.