



HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL

River Valley, Swords, Co Dublin

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Internet Acceptable Use Policy

General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, agreed sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that via the Board of Management, school and parent representatives will revise the AUP annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake 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.

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:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will be supervised by a teacher.
- Children and teachers will be provided with training and information in the area of Internet Safety (eg. www.webwise.ie, Safer Internet Day activities)
- Children and teachers are expected to respect computers, hardware and software and not to intentionally waste limited resources such as paper or ink.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Holy Family Junior National School.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in or use the internet to communicate with Holy Family Junior National School.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Holy Family Junior National School implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in Holy Family Junior National School through interaction with WebWise materials.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Holy Family Junior National School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents.
- Internal monitoring data for network activity.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff through annual SELFIE tool engagement.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the AUP Committee.

Content Filtering

Content filtering is an essential and integrated element of the broadband service that is provided to schools by the Schools Broadband Programme. The purpose of Content filtering is to ensure (in so far as possible) that inappropriate websites and content are not accessible from within schools. Within the content filtering service provided, schools are given a choice of six different levels of content filtering so that they can choose a level that best meets their particular situation, age group of pupils etc. Schools can choose from these six levels, and the chosen level of content filtering is implemented by the Schools Broadband team for the school.

Holy Family Junior National School has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

Level 4 - This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but 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 and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

Internet Use

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (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 will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will 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.
- Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Students and staff will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.

Email and Messaging

Teachers use an individual school email address to communicate with parents.

Possible reasons to email teacher directly:

- To arrange an appointment
- Minor query / clarification
- Feedback
- Submit homework / project work / photos when requested

More serious issues should not be discussed via email. Please arrange an appointment where needed.

Guidelines for parents in relation to this are as follows:

- Emails will be read by teachers daily before and after school. Emails will not be read and responded to during the school day.
- Teachers aim to respond to queries within 3 working days
- Any urgent issues – please contact school office
- Please be mindful of teachers' time. Schedule emails to send at a suitable time if composing an email in the evening or at the weekend.
- Please use appropriate language when communicating with teachers
- No child other than your own should be mentioned by name in email communication as per GDPR guidelines.

It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in the discontinuation of this method of communication.

Social Media and Messaging Services for School Community

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of your school community are expected to follow when using social media.

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, mircoblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube. The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Holy Family Junior National School:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps such as WhatsApp is allowed for staff in Holy Family Junior National School as a means of organisational communication.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is allowed in Holy Family Junior National School for educational purposes.
- All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.
- Staff, students and parents must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Holy Family Junior National School community on social media.
- 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 parents must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Holy Family Junior National School into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of being Holy Family Junior National School on any social medium.

Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

Voluntary No Smart Phone Opt-In

At Holy Family Junior National School, we understand the increasing prevalence of smartphones in today's society. While smartphones offer numerous advantages, we strongly encourage parents to consider delaying the purchase of smartphones for their children until they complete primary school (approximately age 12). This Opt-In Policy (voluntary policy) outlines the potential benefits of this approach and also provides recommendations for responsible phone/ smart device usage for parents who feel that their child must have at least some access to a phone/smart device before they finish primary school.

See Voluntary No Smart Phone Opt-In Policy

Personal Devices

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches with messaging, calling or photo/video capabilities, in Holy Family Junior National School:

- Personal internet-enabled devices are not needed in school and as such should not be brought into Holy Family Junior National School. This includes smart watches that have camera (incl. video), messaging or calling capabilities.
- We recognise that some parents provide their children with phones for outside school hours. While in school, pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones which should be switched off and kept in a school bag.
- Any breach of this guideline will result in the device being confiscated.
- Continued breaches will result in more serious sanctions.

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

Where a digital learning platform is deemed necessary, Holy Family Junior National Schools' digital learning platform will be owned and managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.

- It is recommended that only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform of choice.
- The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).
- Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.
- Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.
- Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

Remote Learning: See Remote Teaching and Learning Policy

Images and Video

- Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
- At Holy Family Junior National School, students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos or videos with personal devices on school grounds or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances for students. However, with the express permission of the school principal, images can be taken by the teacher provided they are transferred immediately and solely to the school's network and deleted from the teachers' device.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of students are published on the school website. This permission will be sought at enrolment.
- Students must not share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside. Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and

absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

- Parents taking pictures at school events such as Christmas Concerts, Sponsored Jog, do not have permission to share these images on social media.

Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation.
- Misuse and fraud legislation.
- Racist material.
- Pornography.
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination.
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred.
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm.
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute.
- Using school systems to run a private business.
- Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school.
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions.
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords).
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files.
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet.
- Online gaming.
- Online gambling.
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums.
- Child sexual abuse material.
- Any other activity considered questionable.

School Website

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.
- Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.
- Holy Family Junior National School will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Holy Family Junior National School web pages.

- Holy Family Junior National School will publish only the first name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online.

Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a persons' sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students' home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the BÍ Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying for Primary and Post Primary Schools, a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their BÍ Cineálta policy.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times. Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, 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 Holy Family Junior National 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 cyberbullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of our school's new BÍ Cineálta Policy. The best way to address cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. As a Junior National School, the access to information and communication technologies is generally class based and monitored. While pupils do not need a mobile phone while in school, we recognise that some parents provide their children with phones for outside hours. While in school, pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones which should be switched off and be kept in a school bag.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour in Holy Family JNS include the following:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum.
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. This incorporates holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
- refer to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.

Close monitoring of internet usage at home is recommended.

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 Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

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 and digital technologies should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

Parental Agreement

Upon entry to the school, parents will be given a copy to read and requested to confirm that they abide by this Acceptable Use Policy. This will be a once off agreement signature and by signing it parents agree to abide by this policy while their child attends this school.

Implementation, Review & Communication

This Policy was initially ratified by the Board on 19th June 2023. It was, updated and ratified on 19th May 2025. This Policy is available to view on the School's website or a copy can be accessed from the School office.

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary.

Signed: Una Whelan
Ms Úna Whelan, (Chairperson)
Board of Management, Holy Family J.N.S.

Dated: 26th May 2025