ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL
Acceptable Use Policy

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Introduction:

The internet and digital media form an important aspect of teaching and learning. Having access to the wealth of information and educational resources available on the internet, empowers student's and promotes life-long learning. It is also profoundly motivating for the students of St. Michael's School. However, some of the content available on the internet is unsuitable for children, therefore the following guidelines will be adhered to for internet usage in the school.

Aim

The aim of the Acceptable Use Policy is to insure 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.

The policy will be made available to all parents/guardians and educational professionals on our website and on request from the school.

School Strategy

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet as follows:

- Use of the internet by pupils will be determined by the individual teacher and the ability of the pupil.
- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a member of staff, in so far as is reasonable.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal USB keys requires a teachers' permission.
- Guidelines will be provided on Internet safety in our school.

Internet Usage:

- ❖ The school has restricted access to the internet and only sites of General and Educational interest are accessible. Inappropriate sites are blocked by Nanny Net.
- ❖ Pupils will use the internet for educational and reinforcement purposes only.
- ❖ Pupils will be supervised by the teacher or SNA when using the web.
- ❖ Personal information will not be disclosed or published.
- ❖ Any usage, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

Email:

Pupils may use approved email accounts under supervision by or with permission from the teacher.

All teachers have a school related email address through Google Suite. This is a secure password protected email address. Teachers must only use this school email address and Google Drive for school business.

Internet chat:

The Principals approval would be required prior to accessing Internet Chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums which will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised by the class teacher.

School Website: (www.stmcr.ie)

Pupils may be supported to publish projects, artwork, or school work on the internet in accordance with approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.

The publication of work will be co-ordinated with the class teacher.

Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from the school website in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

School Facebook Account:

The school Facebook account is used to communicate and share school activities/experiences with friends, families and the wider community. Consent to post photos or videos of pupils on this account must be sought from parents/guardians. Only designated staff members have administrative access to this account.

Staff:

The internet is to be used by staff for educational and professional purposes. Any business outside school hours should get prior approval from the Principal.

Any misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action.

The school reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the authorities.

Staff/visitors/ volunteers: social media

The way you use social media in your private life is a matter for your own personal judgement. Using social media can blur the boundary between your private & professional life. You should keep personal & professional use of social media separate and, as far as possible, avoid communicating with students and/or parents through personal social networking sites.

Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies:

- Never accept or initiate social media friend requests, or other such invites, with current students or parents.
- Discretion should be used when dealing with friend requests from former students or parents of students.
- Must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, school staff, or other members of the school community.
- Must not post or share personal information, use, share, publish or distribute images about pupils, staff and other members of St. Michael's Special Needs School community on any form of social media.
- Must not engage in activities involving social media or any other form of communications technology which might bring St. Michael's Special Needs School into disrepute.
- Must not represent their own personal views as being those of St. Michael's School on any social medium.
- Should take appropriate measures to manage their online privacy and professional reputation while engaging with social media on a personal basis. (see Webwise.ie and INTO.ie for specific advice on this)
- Will adhere to the school guidelines on the use of personal devices during the school day.
- The following platforms are considered social media. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and is subject to change. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Reddit, Whatsapp and Youtube.

Remote/Distance Learning

In circumstances where teaching and learning cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers may use online platforms such as email, Zoom, SeeSaw, WhatsApp or other online platforms approved by the Principal to fulfil the school's obligations for the continuity of curriculum delivery during times where remote learning is deemed necessary by the school.

The school has signed up to the terms of service of the agreed platforms and enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these platforms provide.

Parental consent to engage with online learning should be sought.

When teachers are using Zoom or other video platforms, parents/guardians must accompany their child at all times.

Parents/guardians and staff must abide by security protocols when using online platforms.

Personal Devices

Use of Pupils` mobile phones or personal electronic devices in school is prohibited without the expressed permission from the Principal and written permission & indemnification of the parents.

1.Students may not use any personal device with recording or image taking capability while in school or on a school outing.

2. Staff can use personal devices when they are on their break.

3.Staff personal devices should not be used for educational purposes, in the classroom, or in the presence of pupils.

4. Any images or recordings taken by staff on smartphones or other personal devices must be downloaded onto a school device and then deleted from source.

5. The use of E-readers may be permitted, under the supervision of the teacher.

6. Staff personal devices are to be turned to 'silent' during school hours as per mobile phone policy.

GDPR Compliance:

The school endeavours to adhere to GDPR compliance regulations at all times

At the start of the school year, parental /guardian permission is sought to use/publish photographs and audio or video clips of individual students for the purpose of social media to include Facebook and the school website/blog etc.

Teachers/school use encrypted USB's for planning/storing sensitive information relating to school/students.

Good practice will be maintained in relation to the storage of such information.

Internet Safety Advice and 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.

Useful websites for further information on online and communications technology:

☐ Get With it (Parents Guide to Cyberbullying)

☐ www.esafety.ie (Internet Safety Seminars for Schools/Parents)

☐ www.webwise.ie (Information on Various Forms of Internet Usage)

☐ www.ncte.ie (Information on ICT in Education)

This Policy was Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Management on 22nd November 2023.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Chairperson Board of Management