St Francis National School

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IT and Social Media Acceptable Usage Policy

In reading this policy, it should be noted that the term "Parent(s)" also includes Guardians and should be interpreted as such.

Introduction
St Francis National School recognises that access to Information Technology (IT) gives our pupils enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life.

To that end, we provide access to IT for pupil use. We maintain www.stfrancisns.ie as our school website.

This Acceptable Usage Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our pupils are expected to follow when using school technologies for school activities of any nature.

Technologies Covered
St Francis National School may provide pupils with internet access, desktop computers, digital imaging equipment, laptop or tablet devices, video conferencing capabilities, virtual learning environments, online collaborations capabilities, online discussion forums, blogs and more.

The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all online technologies used in this school, not just those specifically mentioned.

School ICT Network
The computer network at St Francis National School is intended for educational purposes.
- All activity over the network may be monitored and retained

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- Access to online content via the network is restricted in accordance with our policies and the Department of Education and Skills through its agency, the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE)
- Pupils are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the web. If a site is blocked and a pupil believes it shouldn't be, the pupil can ask his/her teacher to submit the site for review. This is done via the Professional Development Service for Teachers Technology Filtering Service BrightCloud
- School staff have full editorial rights over the school website. Pupils will not have access to relevant passwords
- Pupils are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline – these rules are found in the St. Francis National School's Code of Behaviour
- Misuse of school resources may result in disciplinary action
- After using school IT equipment please return to its assigned storage area, log out and charge devices
- We make a conscious effort to ensure pupils' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of school technologies
- When blogging, recording audio or sending any sort of online communication from a school device, pupils must not slander, defame or misrepresent the school or the views of the activities of another individual
- Pupils are expected to tell their teacher immediately of any concerns for safety or security
- There is interaction between parents and the school community on the parent closed group Facebook page. This platform allows Parents to communicate with one another regarding school activities. On occasion school staff may reply to comments posted on Facebook. School staff are not obliged to post comments and/or respond to parent queries on Facebook. All information regarding St Francis National School is communicated through the school website at www.stfrancisns.ie or class Seesaw pages
- The parent closed group Facebook page should not be used as a platform for the expression of personal views and we request parents to adopt a similar policy when commenting online. All complaints and concerns need to be addressed with teacher and principal, not Facebook or WhatsApp
- The parent closed group on WhatsApp should not be used as a platform for the expression of personal views and we request parents to adopt a similar policy when commenting online. No photos of children to be posted on WhatsApp groups
- School related queries should not be sent to staff private numbers or via social media private accounts

Photographs

St Francis National School uses the school website and Seesaw to share information, to promote and celebrate school events. The parent closed group Facebook page may be used for celebrating Parents Association events and weblinks may be posted by teachers on the Facebook page to direct parents to the school website.

We use photographs/video/other multimedia to complement text content on the school website.

We advise the following:
- Photographs of the children will only be displayed online through our various platforms with explicit consent from Parents through a consent form signed upon enrolment
- Pupils will not be named in full – first name will suffice. Should their full name be used at any stage, verbal permission will be sought from Parents
- No pupil shall be photographed and named under that photograph specifically if they are the only pupil in that photograph

Online collaboration through blogging and other platforms

St. Francis National School recognises that online collaboration is essential to education and may provide pupils with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing and messaging among pupils.

Pupils are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful and courteous conduct online as offline.

Mobile devices

St. Francis National school may provide pupils with mobile computers, digital recorders or other devices to promote learning both inside and outside the school.

Pupils should abide by the same expected use policies, when using school devices off the school network, as on the school network.

Pupils are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to school staff immediately. Use of school-issued mobile devices will be monitored.

Mobile devices in the possession of pupils

Pupils may not use personally-owned devices in school (e.g. laptops, tablet computers, digital-cameras, smart-phones and smart-watches) for educational purposes, unless explicitly stated in notes read and signed by Parents and written by their class teacher.

Pupils are only allowed to bring personal internet enabled devices (personal mobile phone/smart-watch) into St Francis National School with expressed permission in writing from parents. At the beginning of the school day pupils carrying these devices must give them to the class teacher for safekeeping until the end of the school day.

Appropriate online behaviour and adherence to the Acceptable Usage Policy should always be used.

School Security
We ask that our pupils use their own judgment if they think a website does not "look right". They must inform their teacher of any concerns. They must think twice before they click on anything they feel is not right. If they believe a computer or mobile device they are using might be infected with a virus, they must alert their teacher.

Netiquette
Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behaviour over computer networks and in particular in the online environment. To this end:
- Pupils should always use the internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner
- Pupils should recognise that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content
- Pupils should not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleagues or employees to see.

More detailed examples of expected use and unacceptable use are given in Appendices 1 and 2.

Plagiarism
- Pupils should not plagiarise content (copy or use as your own without citing the original creator), including words or images, from the Internet for inclusion on our school website or Seesaw
- Pupils should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online/Artificial Intelligence
- The school will encourage pupils who create original content to claim ownership of it

Personal Safety
If pupils see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, they must immediately bring it to the attention of:
- A teacher if they are at school
- A parent if they are at home
- Pupils should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers and birthdates over the Internet without adult permission

- Pupils should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission
- Pupils' images will not be shared online (on the St Francis National School website) without permission from their Parents
- Consequently, other pupils must not take, use or share images of or from other pupils in school on school online platform

Cyber-bullying
Repeated or systematic harassing, degrading, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will not be tolerated in St. Francis National School.

We advise the following:
- Our pupils must not send messages or post comments or photos with the intent of scaring, hurting or intimidating someone else. Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges
- In some cases, cyber-bullying is a crime
- Remember that your activities are monitored and retained
- The school will support pupils, teachers and parents in dealing with cyber-bullying

St Francis National School is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0065/2011) and will act as required by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Health Service Executive.

Violations of this Acceptable Usage Policy
Violations of this policy in St Francis National School may have disciplinary repercussions including:
- Suspension of computer privileges
- Notification to parents in most cases or in more serious circumstances Garda Síochána will be notified
- Suspension from school and/or school related activities
- Expulsion

Permission Form
A Permission Form accepting the terms of this policy is to be read and agreed by Parents on Aladdin Connect. Failure to engage with the Aladdin permission for IT will result in a child being unable to access or use any IT devices within the school. Parents and teachers will remind pupils of their responsibilities using IT devices and engaging online.

Legislation

The school will encourage parents to familiarise themelves on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, pupils 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

Communication

This policy will be available in the Plean Scoile and on the school website.

Responsibility for Review:

All members of staff, Parents Association, BoM.

Timeframe for Review:

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or as required to meet the needs of the school.

Next review: April 2026

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Ratified by the Board of Management on _____13/6/2023_____

_____ (Date)

Signed: _____

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Appendix 1: Examples of Acceptable Use

I will
- use school equipment for school related activities only
- follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow offline
- treat school resources carefully, and alert teachers if there is any problem with their use
- encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use blog or represent the school online
- alert a teacher instantly if I see threatening/ bullying, inappropriate or harmful content (images, messages, postings) online and I will tell the truth when questioned
- use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for learning reasons
- recognise that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such
- be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others
- help to protect the security of school resources

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Pupils should use their own good judgement when using school technologies.

Appendix 2: Examples of Unacceptable Use

I will not:

- use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others
- search inappropriate images or content
- engage in cyber-bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct towards others
- try to find ways to change the school's safety measures and filtering tools
- use school technologies to send spam or chain mail
- plagiarise content (copy, use as their own, without citing the original creator) I find online
- post personally identifying information, about myself or others or agree to meet someone I meet online in real life
- use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom
- use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities
- attempt to access sites, servers, accounts, or content that isn't intended for my use

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Pupils should use their own good judgement when using school technologies.