

Acceptable Use Policy



Lurga National School

Gort,

Co Galway

Introduction

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.

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

- To always treat others with respect.
- 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 several strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Use of the School's Broadband network will be used 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.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a class teacher or SNA / SET.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Lurga NS.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers, and others who access the internet in Scoil Mhuire.

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.

Lurga NS will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases Lurga NS will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Lurga NS implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in 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 Lurga NS through our Stay Safe Programme.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in internet safety.
- Lurga NS participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders: Board of Management, teaching staff, and support staff.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using logs of reported incidents. Should serious online safety incidents take place, Ms Canny should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by Ms Canny and the Digital Learning Team.

Content Filtering

Lurga NS uses Senso Class Cloud, Classroom management cloud software to monitor internet usage on classroom devices and provide an extra level of content filtering.

<https://senso.cloud/gb/classroom-management-cloud-software/>

Lurga NS 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 report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to their class teacher who will in turn inform Ms. Canny.
- 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 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.
- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

Email and Messaging

- The use of personal email accounts by staff is allowed at Lurga NS.
- Staff will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Staff and students should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication.
- Staff should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, do not open.
- Staff will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures in email communications.
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

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, microblogs 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 Lurga NS:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. by students is not allowed in Lurga NS.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is allowed in Lurga NS with express permission from teaching staff.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.

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 and students must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff, and other members of the Lurga Ns 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 and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Lurga NS into disrepute.

Staff and Students must not represent their personal views as those of being Lurga NS on any social medium.

Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here:

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/newsevents/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-ofsocial-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

Personal Devices

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Lurga NS:

- Students are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into Lurga NS.

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

Lurga NS digital learning platform is managed by the school. This platform along with Aladdin should enable two-way communication between teachers and pupils / parents.

Only teacher iPads should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media and this media should be shared where required through the Newsletter, Calendar or on the school website.

All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.

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.

Images and Video

The following should also be taken into consideration:

- 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 Lurga Ns students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Students taking photos or videos with personal devices on school grounds or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances.
- Permission is sought upon enrolment for photographs. Enrolment forms will be checked before photographs of students are published on the school website.
- 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.

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
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging, and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

School Websites

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork, or schoolwork 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.

Lurga NS will use only digital photographs, audio, or video clips focusing on group activities.

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 Lurga NS web pages.

Lurga NS will avoid publishing the full 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' full 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 using information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chatrooms, 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, cyberbullying 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 person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the student's home may not even be a 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 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Lurga NS considers that a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected to always treat others with respect.

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 Lurga NS 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. In addition, the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures, 2013 defines cyberbullying as "placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people" will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.

Permission Form

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

Sanctions

Breaches of the school's AUP are considered a very serious misbehaviour and will result in sanctions being applied as per the school's code of positive behaviour. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

RATIFICATION

This Acceptable Use Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Lurga NS on 16th January 2025.

Chairperson Paul Wexler

Board of Management

Principal and Secretary Dineen Conroy

Board of Management

Date: 16/1/2025