

Internet Acceptable Usage Policy

**Drimoleague N.S.
Uimhir Rolla 18296A**

Introduction and Rationale

Technology is increasingly becoming central to the core of teaching and learning. Both teachers and learners embrace the use of technology and it is embedded in the daily routine of school life. The internet is an essential teaching and learning tool. It facilitates a host of learning opportunities for pupils and provides teachers with a mechanism for which to deliver the curriculum. It can develop children's independent research skills and promote life-long learning.

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the internet in a safe and effective manner. It provides the parameters for what is acceptable use of the internet for educational purposes in the school and in the home environment when teaching and learning is delivered remotely, and specifies the sanctions imposed in cases of inappropriate usage of the internet and related technology.

This document specifies the school policy in relation to all devices which have connectivity to the internet.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

- ICT Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Dignity in the Workplace
- Data Protection Policy
- Home Use of Assistive Technology Policy

Aim

The aim of this Acceptable Usage Policy is to ensure 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. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

Who Does This Policy Apply to?

- This Policy applies to all of the school's "Devices", which means all computers, iPads, laptops, smart phones, other IT resources that connect to the school's network or any other device with internet connectivity potential.
- This Policy applies to staff and students of Drimoleague National School. The school reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time entirely at its discretion.
- This Policy should be read carefully to ensure that the content is accepted and understood
- The aim of the Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students benefit from the learning opportunities offered by internet access in a safe and positive manner. This Policy also aims to establish minimum standards for, and let the students, parents/guardians know of the school's administration and monitoring of, the schools devices, equipment and networks.

General Approach

When using the internet in Drimoleague N.S., 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.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities. Drimoleague N.S. will deal with incidents that take place that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and Cineáltas policies.

Internet Access in Drimoleague National School

There are a number of devices on which pupils and staff can access the internet in the school. These are:

- iPads
- Laptops
- Assistive technology assigned to individual pupils in the school
- Interactive projectors & whiteboards

The children are not permitted to access the internet on devices other than those mentioned above.

Internet access at home by pupils allocated assistive technology is covered by our Home Use of Assistive Technology Policy

School Strategies

The School employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies include, but are not limited to the following:

- A firewall is used on school devices to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material and to block unsuitable sites. This is regularly updated.
- Students will be provided with training by teachers in the area of research techniques specific to the Internet.
- Online safety training will be provided to teachers and will be taught to all students.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software on school devices will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software is used on school devices and updated regularly.
- A teacher will always supervise Internet sessions which are conducted on school devices.
- Websites will be previewed / evaluated by a teacher using a filtering system, before being integrated into lessons conducted on school devices.
- The school's search engine has a built-in 'safe search' feature. The 'safe search' feature will be enabled on all search engines on school devices.
- It is important to note that the school's Anti-Bullying Policy should be read in conjunction with this Policy. Regarding the accessibility of material posted online by others, parents/guardians and students should be aware that placing offensive or hurtful internet messages, images or statements 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. Normal procedures under the school's Cineáltas Policy will apply.

Use of the Internet

- Students will be taught specific lessons on online safety by teachers and how to be responsible digital citizens as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- Students will not knowingly attempt to visit Internet sites on school devices that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials and the school will not be responsible for any attempts taken in this regard.

- In the event of accidentally accessing any of the above sites, the student will be expected to immediately turn off the monitor and report the incident to a teacher.
- The internet will be used to enhance learning and will be used for educational purposes. All websites used by the teacher will be vetted in advance by the teacher.
- Students will not upload, download or otherwise transmit material that is copyrighted on school devices.
- Students will not disclose or publicise personal or confidential information to others online. Examples of this are, but not limited to, their own or classmates' home addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, online profile information or name and location of their school.
- Students will not examine, change or use another person's files, username or passwords. Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving any information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security, and/or network management reasons.
- The school takes every reasonable precaution to provide for online safety, but it cannot be held responsible if students access unsuitable websites either deliberately or inadvertently.

IT Communication Systems: Parameters for Pupils

- When using approved IT systems such as Google Classroom and the GSuite Apps, students will use approved log-ins under supervision of a teacher or parent/guardian.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through e-mails or the Internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Any communication that is offensive or disrespectful to other pupils or to members of staff, or serves to distract others from their learning or engagement in a lesson will be dealt with under our Code of Behaviour.

IT Communication Systems: Parameters for Staff

Teaching staff at Drimoleague N.S. are allocated an official e-mail address: (teachersname@drimoleaguens.com) upon employment in the school. The following applies to all staff working in the school:

- E-mail communication to parents or pupils should be directed from allocated school e-mail addresses only.
- Communications via e-mail or other IT communication systems from the school will be of a professional nature only. The Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct should be followed by all teachers in any communication via e-mail or other IT communication systems with other staff, pupils, parents or members of the wider school community.
- Teachers should not send general communications via e-mail or other IT communication systems on behalf of the school. Any school-wide information is communicated by the Principal or person nominated by the Principal via official channels.
- Communications should only take place within normal working hours (Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.) and there is no onus on staff to respond to requests outside of these hours or during holiday periods.
- Staff are obliged to report any communications of a derogatory or defamatory nature to the Principal and normal procedures under our Dignity in the Workplace policy will apply.
- School staff should note that any information shared, given or received via official school e-mail addresses or other IT communication systems remains the property of the school. Under certain circumstances such as inappropriate use, or a parental or teacher grievance relating to content sent or received by an official school e-mail or IT communication system, the school authority will be given access to this content upon request and without prejudice.

- Staff are familiar with their obligations under GDPR legislation, and information will not be shared with third parties without prior consent by data subjects.
- The school secretary operates e-mail communication via office@drimoleaguens.com, and the standards forementioned apply to all communications with the school office.
- Upon termination of employment by the Board of Management of Drimoleague N.S., staff will relinquish access to official school e-mails, which remain the property of the school.

Learning Management System

- The Board of Management has approved Google Classroom as the official school learning management system. Google Classroom forms part of GSuite for Education used by staff for sharing and storing documents and for general school administration.
- The training in the use of Google Classroom for staff and pupils is linked with the school's Digital Learning Plan.
- Parents must grant permission for their child to use Google Classroom as part of digital learning in the school. Following consent, a school designated log-in will be provided in the format pupilname.student@drimoleaguens.com
- It should be noted that while pupil log-ins are in e-mail format, the e-mail function will be deactivated by the school IT administrator.
- Pupils will be familiar with their log-in and password
- In cases where consent is not given, children will be unable to participate in digital learning activities involving the use of Google Classroom and alternative activities will be arranged while the teacher works with the rest of the class.
- Google Classroom will be used for the following:
 - Accessing learning material provided by the class teacher
 - Creating documents and assignments
 - Saving and storing documents
 - Organising documents into folders
 - Assessment
 - Giving feedback to pupils
 - Other functions as specified in our Digital Learning Plan
 - Assigning and completing homework
 - Periodic teaching of certain subjects, e.g. SESE
- The school's Digital Learning Plan specifies objectives for each class level. Children in senior classes will have a higher proficiency in Google Classroom.
- Children will have access to the school computer room when Google Classroom is being used, based on an agreed rota.
- All laptops, iPads and other IT devices are property of the school. If such property is deliberately jeopardized, privileges will be removed.

Distance Learning

- In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, Google Classroom will be used for the delivery of distance learning school-wide.
- On occasion, platforms such as Zoom, SeeSaw, Study Ladder, Padlet or other relevant platforms approved by the Principal to assist with remote teaching may be used where necessary, particularly in the case of SEN if one of these platforms cater for or supplement their needs more suitably than Google Classroom.
- The school has signed up to the terms of service of the online platforms in use by the school.
- The school has enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these Online Platforms provide.
- Parents/guardians will be provided with the password and will be expected to monitor their child's engagement with the online platform.
- If teachers are using Zoom or any equivalent online meeting platform, these will be accessed via parents' e-mail accounts and will need prior permission from parents.

Video Calls and Internet Chat

From time to time, the school may engage in live events on the internet to enhance learning in a particular topic.. These can be very beneficial in supporting the teaching and learning in the school. To ensure that children access these same experiences, online forums may be used from time to time.

- Discussion forums on Google Classroom or any equivalent learning management system will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised
- From time to time, teachers may organize a video call with an outside speaker or instructor for educational purposes if it is not possible for that person to visit the school physically. This can be a very useful way for children to gain access to and engage with a famous author, artist, sportsperson, etc. These video calls will have a clear purpose and will need prior approval from the Principal. The calls will be done with the whole class via Zoom, Google Meet or other similar secure and GDPR compliant online meeting platform. The class teacher will be present at all times and the school's Child Safeguarding Statement will be adhered to in the same way as though that outside speaker was physically present in the school. Under no circumstances will such calls be recorded.
- Children from time to time may organize displays of their work such as projects, science experiments etc. If it is not possible to showcase this work face-to-face, the school may do so online using a similar platform to that mentioned above. This may be done with other schools and will generally be organized externally. One such example is Primary Science Blast.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting individually with someone they only know through emails or the Internet and this is forbidden

School Website and affiliated Social Media sites, School App.

- The school's website address is: drimoleguens.com
- Drimoleague N.S. does not currently have other social media accounts such as twitter or facebook or a school App but may commit to having so in the future for the purposes of communicating with parents or enhancing the profile of the school.
- Drimoleague N.S. also uses the Aladdin facility for communication and administration purposes.
- Students will be given the opportunity to have photos, projects, artwork and other work relating to curricular and extra-curricular school activities published on the school website as per the consent form. Teachers will coordinate the publication of this material.
- Personal information relating to the student including their full name (first name and surname), home address and contact details will not be included on school social media or the school's website.
- Parents indicate on the school enrolment form whether they consent to the school using digital photographs of their child on the school website.
- Photos taken of school events involving images of children are not allowed to be used by third parties without prior permission of the school. Photographs on our website should not be copied or posted to any social media or other website or published in any way.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested not to 'tag' photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested to ensure that online messages and/or comments to the school's social media sites are respectful. Any messages posted on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school and fall under our Dignity in the Workplace Policy. Messages and comments considered defamatory to the school or school staff posted on the school website or affiliated social media will be reported to the Gardaí and advice received from school legal representative bodies will be acted upon.
- Content of the school website and social media sites will be reviewed regularly. The Principal and the Board welcome any suggestions about how the content may be improved.
- If any parent or guardian has any concern about the appropriateness of the content of the website or social media sites, then the Board asks that the matter be brought to the attention of the Principal as a matter of urgency.
- This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Data Protection Policy.

Other Social Media Sites

The school is a central and integral part of the community in Drimoleague. The staff of Drimoleague N.S. and the school community consisting of parents, pupils, past pupils and others enjoy an excellent relationship. The school staff is highly appreciative of the support it receives from the community and we endeavour to maintain and build this relationship giving due cognisance to the fact that the school as community consists of pupils, parents, teachers and others in the locality, each playing an important and integral role.

As a school, we ensure that all communications posted on social media or on our website about other community organisations and individuals are positive, respectful and serve to enhance that organisation. Equally, we expect that any communications posted about the school, its staff, pupils or parent body are positive, respectful and serve to enhance the profile of the school.

All teachers and other staff in Drimoleague N.S. are entitled to their good name and professionalism. It is unacceptable for anyone to be the subject of offensive comments on social media. Comments, content or material posted online that is considered offensive, defamatory or derogatory to the school or the staff of the school will be reported to the gardaí, school legal representatives and the associated social media platform. Individuals who make offensive, defamatory or derogatory comments about a pupil or member of staff can be blocked, removed and banned from any social media account.

Parents are reminded that should they have a grievance, this should be raised in the first instance with the school using the normal channels of communications. Any attempt to communicate a grievance via social media could hinder that parent's right to due process under our Grievance Procedures.

Personal Devices

- Students may not use any personal device with recording or image taking capability or with connectivity to the internet while in school or on a school outing. Any such breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will be sanctioned accordingly under our Code of Behaviour.
- Any photographs taken by class teachers of children's work or activities on smartphones or other personal devices must be downloaded onto the school server and/or on to the school App/relevant school affiliated website and then immediately deleted from source.
- The use of E-readers may be permitted, under the supervision of the teacher. All personal devices are to be turned off during school hours.

Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

It is our view that no child of primary school age should own their own phone and that childhood should remain smartphone free. Research has proven that smart phone use has a negative impact on children's mental well-being. Smart phone use can affect a child's sleep patterns, their social relationships and concentration in school. Smartphones and other personal devices can prove intrusive and distracting in a school environment. The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images. We strongly advise parents to adhere to guidelines regarding minimum ageing (generally 16) in relation to the use of social media apps.

Drimoleague N.S. prohibits the use by students of personal mobile/smart phones, and other similar personal devices, while on school premises or involved in school activities such as tours, trips or extra-curricular activities. This is in order to create a safer environment and to lessen intrusions on, and distractions to, children's learning.

The following states the school policy in relation to smart phones and other personal electronic devices:

- The possession or use of personal mobile/smart phones and other personal devices by children who attend the school is not allowed while the children are in the care of the school staff, while at school, on trips from the school or involved in extra-curricular activities. The children should, therefore, not bring mobile phones and other personal devices to school or when engaging in school-related activities.
- Children who need to contact home during school hours may do so through the school office.
- If children are meeting with friends after school, it is not permissible for them to have their phones in school in order to contact parents that evening, even if they are switched off in bags.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure that your child is reached in a timely manner and a message passed onto them.
- Staff are permitted to use their phones for school-related business only or for emergencies. Staff should not use their phones for personal reasons during teacher-pupil contact time.
- The school will not be liable for mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.

On rare occasions, there may be a necessity for a child to have a mobile phone in school. This will only be in exceptional circumstances where to deny such access would have implications on a child's health and safety (e.g. medical reasons). If such access is requested, the following procedures will apply:

- Parents must send the Principal a letter requesting that their child be permitted to bring his mobile phone/device to school and specifying the reasons for same. The letter should be addressed to the Principal. This letter will be kept on file.
- A decision will be made by the school based on the reason stated and this will be communicated to the parent by the Principal.
- In the event where the request is granted, the phone must be turned off throughout the school day and handed to the school office. If it is a case that the phone must be accessed during the day, e.g. for medical monitoring, this can only be done so under the supervision of an adult.

The following sanctions apply in circumstances where pupils are found in possession of mobile phones:

- Phone found in school, or during school activity
 - Phone to be confiscated and to be collected from the school office by parent/guardian at the end of the school day or end of the school activity.
 - A repeat of this will be treated as a serious misdemeanour under the school's Code of Behaviour and will be dealt with accordingly
- Phone found being used in school or at associated school activity
 - Serious misdemeanour and Code of Behaviour procedures will be referred to.
- Phone or other device being used to share inappropriate material
 - Gross misdemeanour and Code of Behaviour procedures will be referred to.
- Phone or other device being used to make recordings or take images of a pupil or staff member without their knowledge or consent
 - Gross or extreme misdemeanour, depending on the nature of the usage, and violation of our Dignity in the Workplace policy. Code of Behaviour procedures will be referred to.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the School in this regard is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the School may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

Legislation and Regulation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet with which teachers, students and parents/guardians should familiarise themselves where appropriate:

- EU General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Anti-Bullying Guidelines for Primary Schools 2013
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Video Recording Act 1989

- The Data Protection Act 1988
- Interception Act 1963

Support Structures and Education

- The school will inform students and parents/guardians of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.
- The school runs a programme on acceptable internet usage periodically for students and parents/guardians. This will cover several topics including cyber-bullying.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to the development of AUPs, internet safety and cyber-bullying.

Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) Resources

Drimoleague National School's information and technology resources (e.g. e-mail, computers, computer applications, networks, internet, intranet, phone and other wireless communications devices, telephone, paging and voice mail systems and the like) are school property and are provided solely for school related activities.

Inappropriate use including hacking, pirating software, using school resources for non-school commercial activities, soliciting, distributing literature for outside entities, disclosing confidential information of the school, sending inappropriate e-mail or accessing inappropriate websites (such as those advocating hate or violence, containing sexually explicit material promoting illegal activities), or using school resources in a way that violates the letter or spirit of the school's policies or reflects negatively on the school is forbidden.

Users of the school's information and technology resources must not share passwords. If you allow others to use your password or assigned resource, you will be held responsible for their use. Consistent with national laws, the Board of Management reserves the right to monitor the use of its information and technology resources and to take appropriate disciplinary actions, or denying future access privileges in cases of misuse. Staff/student use of the school's information and technology resources constitutes consent to such monitoring. All such monitoring will be conducted in accordance with law including, where applicable, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet or any activity which is in contravention with this Policy, may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, and, where appropriate, suspension or expulsion in line with the Code of Behaviour. Sanctions imposed will be proportionate to misdemeanor as per the school's Code of Behaviour. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities. Access to the Internet will be withdrawn from students who fail to maintain acceptable standards of use.

Review

This policy was reviewed in February 2025. It is available on the school website and a copy is supplied to parents as part of the enrolment pack.
Policy review in 3 - 5 years time or as the need arises.

Ratification and Communication

Ratification by the Board of Management

This plan will be communicated to the Board of Management, long-term substitutes, temporary teachers and all staff members

Ratified by Board of Management in February 2025