



ST. PETER'S SCHOOL

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



## **Acceptable Use (ICT) Policy**

### **Introductory Statement**

St. Peter's School recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our pupils and school community enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life as well as enhancing the learning experience for both pupils and staff. To that end, the school provides access to ICT and the internet to pupils and staff. This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that pupils, parents, staff, BOM and approved visitors/speakers etc are expected to follow when using ICT technologies for curricular and any other school related activities.

This policy aims to ensure that students in St. Peter's School will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources in a safe and effective manner, and that they will be protected from harmful and/or illegal use of the internet. The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet while they are school.

### **General Principles**

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher. Student's will be taught about safe internet usage during each academic year and before accessing the internet in school.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor students' Internet usage.
- Internet safety posters will be displayed.

- Students, parents and school staff will be offered training in the area of Internet safety by means of an annual Internet Safety Seminar. These seminars provide guidance on how to safely navigate the internet and how to use the internet safely and responsibly.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Students should never attempt to upload or download software, music, videos or any other material onto school ICT.
- The use of any form of removal storage (such as memory sticks, CD-ROMs etc.) is not permitted.
- The transfer/retrieval of school information, applications or data onto any other device is not permitted.
- Students will observe good 'netiquette' (i.e., etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

### **Internet Usage**

Students;

- will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful, or otherwise objectionable materials.
- will use the internet for educational purposes only.
- will be taught about copyright issues relating to online learning.
- who copy information or images from the Web into their assignments will acknowledge the source.
- will never disclose or publicise or share personal information of their own or anyone else.
- will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.

### **Email**

- The use of school-based applications, such as email addresses, in a personal context or outside of school, is not permitted.
- Students will be made aware that all information and activity on school applications, such as email addresses, is monitored.
- Students will not use their own personal e-mail addresses to send e-mails from school.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, or defamatory, or material 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.

- Photographs of individual children will never be sent by e-mail. Photographs of students involved in group activities will only be sent with the permission of the teacher.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.

### **Internet chat and forums**

Students do not have access to chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums.

### **School Website**

<https://stpeterssch.ie/>

- Student's work may be published on the School Website. The publication of students' work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal information including home addresses and contact details will not appear on the school website.

### **Devices**

- St. Peter's Special School may provide students with laptops, tablets, digital cameras, digital recorders, or other devices to promote learning both inside and outside of the school.
- Students are expected to treat these devices with respect, and should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to their teacher immediately.
- Teachers will decide what apps are appropriate for their class.
- Students must not move away from the app their teacher has opened for them to work on unless they have been instructed by their teacher.
- Students may not access the App Store or download apps to the tablets.
- Students may not delete or move apps or folders.

### **Personal Mobile Devices**

- Students may not use personally owned digital devices in school without the explicit permission of the teacher.

- The school will take no responsibility for loss or damage to personally owned digital devices.
- Students' phones must be switched off during the school day and not used on the school premises.
- Students are not permitted to use phones as cameras under any circumstances in school, on school trips or during extra-curricular activities.
- Please see St Peter's School policy on Mobile Phone Use for further information.

## **Security**

- We ask that our students use common sense if they think a website does not look 'right'. They must not click on anything they feel is not right.
- Students and staff members are expected to alert the class teacher immediately of any concerns for safety or security.
- If students or staff members believe a computer or mobile device they are using might be infected with a virus, they must alert the class teacher.

## **Personal Safety**

- If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, they should bring it to the immediate attention of a teacher if they are at school a parent/ guardian if they are at home.
- Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers and birthdates over the Internet.
- Students' images will not be in our school newsletter, without explicit expressed permission from their parents. Parents will sign their consent (Appendix A) during the enrolment process, from September 2025.
- Students must not take, use, or share images of or from other students on school online platforms.

## **Content Filtering**

- St Peter's School uses level 4 content filtering, provided to schools by the School's Broadband Programme.
- The purpose of 4 content filtering is to ensure (as far as possible) that inappropriate websites and content is not accessible from within schools.
- For more information on the categories allowed by level 4 filtering - access the PDST Technology website.

## **Cyber-bullying**

- Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Antibullying Policy.
- Harassing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will not be tolerated in St. Peter's Special School. In some cases, cyber-bullying is a crime.
- St. Peter's School is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0081/2017) and will act as required. The school will support students, teachers and parents in dealing with cyberbullying.
- St Peter's School will support students and parents/guardians affected by cyber-bullying, should this take place, we recommend that parents inform the school and contact the Gardaí.

## **Distance Learning**

- In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers and SNAs (under the direction of teachers), may use a range of online platforms including Zoom and Microsoft Teams. 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.
- Staff members will adhere to school guidelines on the use of platforms for live engagement. If teachers or SNAs are using Zoom, parent's email addresses will be used for junior children to access lessons or meetings. Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign a consent form for their children to engage with teachers and SNAs using online platforms. Parents/Guardians must agree to monitor their child's participation in any such lesson and to be in the room with the child for anyone-to-one meeting or class.

## **Supporting Structures**

The school regularly update students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Breaches of this policy in St. Peter's School may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of ICT privileges.
- Notification to parents/guardians.

- Sanctions in accordance with the St Peter's School Code of Behaviour and Antibullying Policy.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

St. Peter's School make a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of school technologies.

### **Roles/responsibilities**

- The Board of Management is responsible for the formulation of this policy.
- The principal and teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy during the school day.
- Parents and guardians are responsible for the internet usage of the students while they are outside school. It is important that all parents/guardians monitor their own child's internet usage at home and ensure that their children are aware and respectful of the risks involved.

### **Resources for online safety**

- Zeeko website
- Cyber Safe Kids <https://www.cybersafekids.ie/>
- Coimisiún na Meán <https://www.cnam.ie/online-safety/>
- Webwise <https://www.webwise.ie/>

This policy has been drawn up by the principal in collaboration with the staff of St. Peter's School and in consultation with the Board of Management. It will be made available to all members of the school community.

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended if necessary.

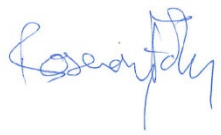
Rosemary Fahy

Principal St. Peter's School

Eoin Ó Donnagáin

Chairperson to the Board of Management

Signed:



Date: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Signed:



Date: 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025

## Appendix A



**Parental permission for your child to access to the Internet and to have their work or photograph published in the school newsletter.**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We give permission for my/our child to have access to the Internet in St. Peter's Special School YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

I/We give permission for my/our child to have their work/photograph published in the school newsletter.

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

I/We give permission for my/our child to have their photograph displayed in the school building.

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

I/We have read the 'Acceptable Use Policy' with my/our child. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_