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Acceptable Use Policy

Aim

This policy applies to all school digital devices, including computers, laptops, tablets, iPads, and any other information and communication technology (ICT) hardware connected to the school's network. It applies to all individuals who have access to, or make use of, ICT systems and resources in Moynalvey National School, including pupils, staff members, volunteers, parents/guardians, and visitors.

This policy has been developed collaboratively by the Principal, Deputy Principal, teaching staff and the Board of Management (BoM). The BoM reserves the right to amend this policy at any time, at its sole discretion. All members of the school community are expected to read this policy carefully to ensure that its contents are fully understood and accepted.

The purpose of this Acceptable Use Policy ("AUP" or "the Policy") is to ensure that all children benefit from the learning opportunities provided through digital technologies and internet access in a safe, respectful, and positive manner. The policy also aims to define minimum standards for responsible digital use and to inform pupils, parents/guardians, and staff about the school's procedures for managing, monitoring, and securing devices, equipment, and network access.

Internet access and the use of digital technologies are regarded as valuable educational resources. However, all use must be consistent with the school's ethos and policies.

- Where a member of staff breaches this policy, appropriate disciplinary measures will be implemented in line with school procedures.
- Where a pupil misuses internet access or digital technologies, consequences may include withdrawal of access privileges, disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Behaviour, detention, and, in serious cases, suspension or expulsion.

The BoM also reserves the right to report any illegal or serious online activities to the appropriate statutory authorities.

Schools strategy:

This policy has been developed to safeguard pupils from the risks associated with internet use, both within the school environment and when engaging in online or distance learning activities.

While pupils may occasionally receive internet-based homework or research tasks, Moynalvey National School cannot accept responsibility for students' internet usage outside

of school. Parents and guardians are therefore strongly encouraged to monitor their child's online activity at home and to ensure that their child understands and respects the potential risks involved in using the internet.

Given the vast and interconnected nature of online information, it is not possible to guarantee that inappropriate or objectionable material will never appear on a device. Consequently, neither the school nor the BoM can accept liability for material inadvertently accessed, or for any consequences arising from such access.

Moynalvey National School employs a range of strategies to maximise the educational benefits of internet use while minimising associated risks. These strategies include:

General Guidelines

- All staff members and other adults supervising pupils' internet access will receive a copy of this Acceptable Use Policy and will have its purpose and procedures clearly explained.
- Parents and guardians will be made aware of the Acceptable Use Policy at the time of their child's enrolment. The policy will also be made available on the school's official website.
- Pupil access to the internet will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Broadband services are provided by the Department of Education through a centrally managed service. This service includes filtering, website and content blocking, antivirus protection, and anti-spam controls, as managed by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) Technology in Education team.
- Uploading or downloading unauthorised or non-approved software is strictly prohibited. Virus protection software will be installed and updated regularly on all school devices.
- Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to visit www.webwise.ie for information, guidance, and resources on safe and responsible internet use.
- The use of removable or external digital storage devices (such as USB memory sticks, external hard drives, or CD-ROMs) requires prior approval from a teacher.
- Teachers using interactive whiteboards, projectors, or online multimedia resources must preview all materials in advance to ensure that content is age-appropriate and consistent with this Acceptable Use Policy.
- Students must not attempt to upload, download, or share software, music, videos, or other digital content without prior permission from a staff member.
- Students must not access online games, apps, or websites that are not approved or authorised by their teacher.
- 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. Good netiquette will be demonstrated to the children through activities on www.webwise.ie.

- It is important that parents/ guardians and pupils are aware of our *Bí Cinéalta* Policy (Anti-Bullying) in relation to social media.
- However, it should be noted that in the context of this policy, placing a onceoff 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 whether it is sent during school hours or after. It is in the remit of An Garda Síochána to follow up on any reports of Cyber Bullying.
- Specific lessons on Internet Safety and Netiquette will be taught during Safety Week.

Internet Use and Online Communication

World Wide Web

- All websites, platforms, and applications accessed by pupils must be approved by the teacher in advance.
- Neither pupils nor staff (including contractors or others working on behalf of the school) may access, share, or distribute material that is obscene, illegal, hateful, or otherwise inappropriate. Any breach of this policy will be addressed in line with the BoM's disciplinary and/or Child Protection procedures. The school reserves the right to report any illegal activity to the appropriate authorities.
- Students must not intentionally visit websites that contain offensive or unsuitable content.
- If inappropriate material is accessed accidentally, pupils must report this immediately to the supervising teacher in accordance with school procedures.
- The internet is to be used for educational purposes only during class time.
- Pupils will be taught about copyright, digital citizenship, and responsible online behaviour as part of the curriculum. When using online sources for research or assignments, pupils must acknowledge the original source.
- Personal information (such as names, addresses, phone numbers, or photographs) must never be disclosed or published online.
- Downloading or accessing materials not directly related to schoolwork is a breach of this Acceptable Use Policy.
- All online activity, including the distribution or receipt of information, whether school-related or personal, may be subject to monitoring for security, safety, and network management purposes.

Web 2.0, Social Media, and Online Platforms

With the introduction of interactive online tools, communication between the school and the wider community has become more dynamic and immediate. Moynalvey National School recognises the educational value of these tools for communication, collaboration, and distance learning. Platforms such as Aladdin, Seesaw, Zoom, Google Drive, Twitter, Padlet, or similar applications may be used by the school for communication and learning purposes.

Although these platforms are not owned by the school, all content shared through them is governed by this Acceptable Use Policy.

The online safety and digital wellbeing of all pupils remain the school's highest priority. The following guidelines apply to all members of the school community:

- Many social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) have minimum age requirements. While the school does not monitor personal accounts, parents/guardians are strongly advised not to permit their child to have personal profiles on these sites until they reach the appropriate age.
- Where social media tools are used by teachers for educational purposes (e.g. Twitter for class projects), all activity will take place under direct teacher supervision.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to regularly review their child's online activity, including social media apps (such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.), and to be aware of their child's digital interactions.
- Any online communication from the school to parents or pupils (e.g. via Zoom, Seesaw, Aladdin, or Google Drive) will be password protected where possible to ensure privacy and security.
- All members of the school community are expected to respect online communication by not recording, photographing, or distributing any webinars, video calls, lessons, or school meetings without prior permission.
- Photographs or content that identify children or staff should never be tagged, shared, or uploaded on social media.
- When uploading photos for school-related purposes (e.g. to class platforms), care must be taken not to identify individual children, and image sizes should be kept to a minimum.
- Online messages, comments, or posts to the school or about the school should always be respectful and appropriate. Any communication on social media will be treated in the same way as written correspondence to the school.
- Negative or disrespectful online discussions about children, staff, or other parents are not acceptable. Parents/guardians are asked not to send "friend" or "follow" requests to members of staff on personal social media accounts, as staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries.
- Advertising or promotional content may not be posted on school-affiliated platforms without prior permission from the Principal.
- Parents/guardians who take photos or videos on school grounds (e.g. at concerts or events) must ensure these are used for personal use only and are not shared on any social media platform. Respecting the privacy of other pupils and families is essential.

Breaches of these guidelines may result in restricted or permanent removal of access to the school's online platforms and Web 2.0 services.

Email

Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Moynalvey NS . Students will use approved school email accounts.

- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- 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.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, pupils should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- 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 emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher
- Students will not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or “reply all” without the permission of the originator
- Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school based work.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.
- Students should 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. Pupils should report any such communications to a teacher.
- 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, mircoblogs such as X, 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 Moynalvey NS:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in Moynalvey NS .
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is only to be accessed with 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 Moynalvey 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 Moynalvey NS into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of Moynalvey 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/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

School Websites

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work 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.
- 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 Moynalvey NS web pages.
- The Moynalvey NS will avoid publishing the first name and last 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' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online.

Personal Devices

- Electronic devices belonging to pupils (mobile phones, smart watches, communication watches, games console etc. *list is non-exhaustive*) are not allowed in school at any time. This includes school tour days or events taking place off-site.
 - Exceptions can be made in certain circumstances, mainly in relation to medical reasons. For example a child with diabetes may have a glucose monitoring app on their phone. In the case where a child needs a personal device for medical reasons, the following steps are taken:
 - Parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil write to the BoM making a request for the use of a personal device for medical reasons.
 - The BoM will consider the application and respond to the parent(s)/guardian(s) with a decision.
- If a pupil is found to be in possession of an unauthorised personal device the following steps will be taken.
 - The device will be confiscated by the teacher and brought to the principal's office.
 - The principal will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil and ask them to retrieve the personal device. The personal device will not be returned to the pupil.
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Legislation:

Management, staff and parents should familiarise themselves with following legislation relating to use of the Internet:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

Sanction

Moynalvey NS, endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents and pupils feel supported in same.

- The school will endeavour to provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying for pupils in 5th and 6th class.
- The school will provide the opportunity for Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for parents and guardians to all parents in the school and as requested by PA
- Community Gardaí link in with classes re Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to AUP, internet safety and Cyber
- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the internet.

Sanctions

- Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Sanctions can include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Review

This policy was reviewed in November 2025 and ratified by the BoM in February 2026. It will be updated regularly as developments in technology continue to impact on education in particular.



Frank Martin (Chairperson of BoM)



Mícheál Brennan

Mícheál Brennan (Principal Teacher)