

St Joseph's N. S. Mell

Acceptable Use Policy

Introduction

The Internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It provides information and allows people to communicate with others and share information. It can develop children's independent research skills and promote life-long learning. However, some material available on the Internet is unsuitable for children and the following guidelines will be adhered to when using the Internet.

Aim

The aim of this acceptable use policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from the 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 a 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

School's Strategy

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

General

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- 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 pupils' Internet usage.
- Teachers will discuss internet safety with their class.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal floppy disks, memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's permission.

World Wide Web

- Pupils will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain unsuitable or objectionable material.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials to a teacher.
- Pupils will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Pupils will never disclose or publish personal information.

Emails

- Pupils will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.

- Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

School Website

The school does not at present have a website but may do in the future. In such an event-

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web.
- The publication of pupils' work will be co-ordinated by a teacher
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips of individual pupils will not be published on the school website. Instead photographs, audio and video clips will focus on group activities and will only be published with parental consent. Video clips may be password protected.
- Personal pupil details including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Personal Devices

Pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance messages or the unauthorized taking of images with a mobile phone camera, still or moving, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

Support Structures

The school will inform pupils and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

For further advice checkout:

- WEBWISE.IE – This site aims to promote safe use of the Internet among young people and has advice for parents, teachers and children.
- "GET WITH IT" published by the Internet Advisory Board – A parent's guide to new media.

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action, including

- written warnings
- withdrawal of access privileges
- in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementing this policy rest with all members of the staff of Mell School.

Timeframe for Implementation

September 2009

Review

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals by the staff

Ratification and Communication:

This policy will be presented to the Board of Management for ratification. A copy will be made available to the Parents' Council of Mell School.