

St Malachy's Boys' National School

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

'Building confidence to realise potential'



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General Approach

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.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP at least annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

When using the internet 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.

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:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.

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- The use of personal external digital storage media in school requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in St Malachy's BNS.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St Malachy's BNS.

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.

St Malachy's BNS will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff.

St Malachy's BNS implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.

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- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- St Malachy's BNS 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, parents and support staff.

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, digital team, students, parents representatives, and representatives of the Board of Management.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents.
- Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited).
- Internal monitoring data for network activity.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal should be informed.

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

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Content Filtering

St Malachy's BNS has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

Level 3 -This level allows access to millions of websites including games but blocks YouTube, and 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.

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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 the supervising teacher and/or principal.
- 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.

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- 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.

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Email and Messaging

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

The use of personal email accounts is only allowed at St Malachy's BNS with expressed permission from members of the teaching staff.

- Students may, on occasion, need to use approved school email accounts.
- Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other pupils.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
- Students will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students should be aware that email communications are monitored.
- 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.

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- 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.

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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 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 St Malachy's BNS :

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in St Malachy's BNS.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is allowed in St Malachy's BNS with express permission from teaching staff.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.

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- 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 St Malachy's BNS 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 St Malachy's BNS into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of bring St Malachy's BNS 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>

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Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school should follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smart watches, in St Malachy's BNS:

- Students are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into St Malachy's BNS.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time.

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Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

St Malachy's BNS digital learning platform (E.g. Aladdin, Teams, Seesaw, etc) is managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.

- Students must only use their personal login for accessing the school digital learning platform.
- Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.
- 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.
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought (via admission forms) for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

Remote Learning Policy:

In the event of remote learning Seesaw will be used as the main communicate between staff and pupils. Zoom may also be used on occasions.

Parent/staff communication should take place via school email.

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- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- Staff, families and students are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
- It is the duty of parents/guardians to supervise children while they are working online and to ensure any content which they are submitting to their teacher is appropriate.
- Staff members can communicate with pupils and their families via school email or through an established app (eg. Seesaw).
- Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
- Students and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified (Seesaw, Zoom, Office 365)
- Parental permission will be acquired (*via admissions form*) before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum.
- For video/Zoom calls, parental permission is implied, as the link to a video call will be communicated via the parent/guardian's email address. Essentially, by virtue of the pupil logging on to the call, permission is assumed.
- For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
- St. Malachy's B.N.S. cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are hacked.
- Communication using a mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.

Guidelines for staff members using online communication methods:

Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.

- Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours of 8.30am - 3pm, where possible.
- Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.
- Staff members will seek to become familiar with apps before using them with pupils.

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- Staff will check that consent has been given, before setting up a pupil profile for an online app.
- Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.
- Staff are encouraged to generate a new meeting ID and password for each Zoom meeting being held.
- Staff members will notify parents/guardians of the date, time and password for a video call via email.
- Staff members will only admit participants to video conferences, if they recognise the email address/username as being connected to a pupil.

Rules for pupils using online communication methods:

For submitting learning:

- Submit work and pictures that are appropriate - have an adult take a look at your work before you send it.
- Use kind and friendly words.
 - For video calls:
 - Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
 - Remember our school rules - they are still in place, even online.
 - Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
 - Join the video with your microphone muted.
 - Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
 - If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
 - Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
 - Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
 - Be on time - set a reminder if it helps.

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Guidelines for parents and guardians:

For learning:

- It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
- Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
- Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

For video calls/Zoom:

- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
- The main purpose of a video call is to maintain a social connection between the school staff and pupils at this difficult time. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
- Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted or have disabled your camera.
- You will automatically enter a waiting room when the code for a Zoom call has been entered. Please note that school staff will only accept users into video call if you can be identified by the display name on your zoom account.
- Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the Zoom call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
- Make sure to familiarise your child with the software in advance. For video in particular, show them how to mute/unmute and turn the camera on/off.
- Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
- An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.

For detailed information on GDPR and Zoom, please visit <https://zoom.us/privacy>

- It is important to note that any breach of the above guidelines will result in a discontinuation of this method of communication. A breach may also result in a person being immediately removed from a meeting or in a meeting being immediately terminated. In this case, the child's parent will receive a report on the incident.

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Images and Video

- 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 St Malachy's BNS students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities are only allowed with expressed permission from staff.

- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of students are published on the school website. (*via admission form*)

- 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.

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Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer 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

- 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

- Online gaming

- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums

- Any other activity considered questionable

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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.
- St Malachy's BNS will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips on the school website with parental permission. (*via admission form*)
- 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 St Malachy's BNS webpages.
- The St Malachy's BNS 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.

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Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms 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, cyber-bullying 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 persons sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the student's home may not even be a safe 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 cyber bullying 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, St Malachy's BNS 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 treat others with respect at all times.

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.

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Measures are taken by St Malachy's BNS 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 cyber bullying even when it happens outside the school or at night. In addition the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures, 2013 defines cyber bullying 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 behavior.

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

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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

Support Structures

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 and digital technologies should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

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This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in St. Malachy's BNS.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once annually. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.