

St. Joseph's N.S. Rathdonnell,  
Trentagh, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

074 91 37315

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March 2020

## **COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURES –POLICY AMENDMENTS:**

### **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Internet Access**

#### ***Aim***

The aim of this Acceptable Use 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent/guardian representatives will revise the AUP as deemed necessary.

Due to emergency school closures from March 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made changes to our teaching and learning approaches to facilitate online learning practices. This updated document provides guidance for the school community on these changes.

#### ***School's Strategy***

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

*Teachers may support their pupils via online platforms such as email, Class Dojo Google Classrooms and Google Meet, and may make contact with their parents/guardians via WhatsApp, text, email. In all instances, parental/guardian consent is given either by ticking consent on app, by response to email, or by providing teacher with phone details.*

*Sometimes parents/guardians will ask for teachers support with regard to their child's wellbeing or self-motivation, and teachers may get in touch with parent/guardian to facilitate same.*

*In the case of Google Meet, parents/guardians are expected to remain in room with child, for entire duration of meeting. In all cases, the recording of any meetings by pupils is strictly prohibited.*

**The strategies apply to staff and pupils when using school resources, representing the school or wearing the school uniform. These strategies are as follows:**

## General:

- In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers and
- SNAs, acting under the direction of teachers, may use a range of online platforms including
- Google Classroom, Google Meet, Padlet and Class Dojo as approved by the principal, to assist with distance teaching and learning.
- 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.
- Google Meet calls will take place within the agreed parameters – for example, pupils cannot set up Google Meet calls.
- Parents/ guardians must 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 lessons and to be in the room with the child for any one-to-one meetings or classes.
- Children will be expected to follow school guidelines on online behaviour.
- In school, every effort is made to ensure child safety, with supervision at all times when using internet.
- Safe-Surfing settings, on school devices, will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate materials.
- Pupils and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety and Digital Citizenship. During Covid 19 closures, parents/guardians will be directed to [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) to access guidelines re online safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted.
- Anti-Virus software will be used and updated as necessary.
- The use of personal memory sticks in school requires a teacher’s permission.
- Students and staff will observe good online etiquette at all times. They will not undertake any actions that may be considered disrespectful to members of the school community, or bring the school into disrepute.
- School staff has access to all files used on school computers, including e-mail messages sent and received by pupils.
- School devices may record details of what pupils have viewed on the Internet. These records may be reviewed by school staff.
- ***In the case of laptops lent to families during Covid 19 school closures, an agreement will be signed by parent/guardian about its safekeeping and safeguarding of child for whom its use is intended.***

## World Wide Web:

- Pupils or staff will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Pupils and staff will be educated regarding copyright issues relating to online materials.
- Pupils will never disclose or publicise their own or others personal information

- Pupils or staff will be aware that any internet usage may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Pupils will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone that they have “met” on the Internet.

#### **E-mail:**

- Pupils may only use parent/guardian approved email accounts under the supervision of or with permission from a teacher.
- Pupils or staff will not intentionally send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene or defamatory or that is intended to harm or intimidate another person.
- Pupils must have permission to send and open email attachments.

#### **Internet Discussion:**

- Students will only have access to discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.
- Discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.

#### **School Social Media**

- Pupils, in consultation with their teachers, will be given the opportunity to publish their work through the school-led invitations via Class Dojo or Google classroom.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Pupil’s work will appear in an educational context on school sites.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips of individual students will not be published on the school sites. Instead these will focus on group activities. Individual pupils will not be identified by name.
- Pupil’s home address and contact details will be omitted from school publications
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- **During the school year, parents/guardians are requested not to share any photos of children other than their own, on their social media, without permission. This includes photos which they may take themselves at school events, or photos shared by the school.**

#### **Legislation:**

There is no specific legislation governing Internet safely at school level. Complicating this issue is the fact that the Internet functions in a global context whereas the law operates in a localised one. There are, however; a number of legislations that have relevance to Internet safety. Copies of each of these Acts can be found online. All teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with these Acts. They are briefly described as follows:

**The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998:** This Act legislates against anyone who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses or sells child pornography. [http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998\\_22.html](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998_22.html)

**1993 Interception Act:** (The Interception of Postal Packets and Telecommunications Messages Regulation Act 1993). This Act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence. Authorisations are subject to certain conditions. [http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1993\\_10.html](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1993_10.html)

**Video Recordings Act 1989:** The 1989 Video Recordings Act prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material which may lead to the deprecation or corruption of the viewer. <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1989.html>

**The Data Protection Act 1988:** This Act was passed in order to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on computer about individuals. <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA25Y1988.html>

### **Sanctions:**

- If any of the above conditions/rules are broken, it will result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet and/or computer use.
- Additional disciplinary action may be taken in line with existing approved school practice.

### ***Policy Review***

Rathdonnell NS's Acceptable Use policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is compliant with current legislation and school practice. The review will be led by the leadership team in consultation with school management and staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

### ***Ratification and Communication***

The Board of Management of Rathdonnell NS ratified this revised policy at its meeting on 16/6/2020. A copy will be available on the school website.

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on the 16/6/2020**

Signed: *Fr. Patrick Dunne* Chairperson

Signed: *Gráinne Duggan* Principal