



## SCOIL MUIRE BALLINCOLLIG ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET POLICY

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### \* **Introductory Statement**

The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) was originally formulated for Scoil Mhuire in April 2004 and it has been updated a number of times. This revision took place in September 2016.

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### \* **Rationale**

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce the risks associated with the Internet. It is envisaged that the school will revise the AUP periodically.

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### \* **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Our school cherishes all pupils equally. The Internet offers a wide range of learning and recreational opportunities for children. The provision of an AUP identifies the school's strategy on promoting safe use of the Internet. It also defines the parameters of acceptable behaviour and specifies the consequences of violating those parameters.

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### \* **Aims**

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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions as outlined in the AUP will be imposed.

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\* **Contents of the Plan**

Strategies as referred to in the Rationale are as follows:-

- > Internet access is available to all pupils and the school will monitor Internet usage.
- > Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher/ SNA.
- > Scoil Mhuire will strive to ensure that inappropriate materials will not be available. In that regard protection filters are installed for the safe use of Internet in school.
- > Uploading and downloading of non-approved software and content will not be permitted.
- > Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.

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- > 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.
  - > Teachers will ensure that pupils understand appropriate use of the Internet and are aware of the rules.
  - > Pupils will be required to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

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- > The teacher will always lead searching for information on the Internet and pupils will not be allowed "free exploration" of this resource.
  - > Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.

- > Students will not be allowed to register or sign "visitors" books at websites.
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\* **Email**

- > Access to personal Email is totally denied to the students of Scoil Mhuire.
  - > Access to Email may occasionally be given to a group of students in the context of a specific class project under the direction and supervision of a teacher. Students' personal email addresses must not be used for such projects.
  - > In the context of any such class project involving Email, teachers must take care to ensure that no personal information which may allow others to make direct contact with individual pupils is contained in any Email communication.
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\* **Social Media**

- > Personal access to Social Media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Skype and others, is totally denied to the students of Scoil Mhuire.
- > Access to Social Media sites may occasionally be given to a group of students in the context of a specific class project under the direction and supervision of a teacher. Students' personal Social Media accounts or handles must not be used for such projects, and individual students must not be tagged in a way that allows a link-up with their personal Social Media presence.
- > Uploading of content, including photographs and video, or posting to Social Media sites is denied to the students.
- > Access to Skype or other live video chat media in the context of class projects is only permitted to class groups in the direct and visible presence of a teacher. Recording of Skype sessions may only be conducted by the teacher as part of the project brief and requires the prior permission of the Principal of Scoil Mhuire and the responsible Skype partner.

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**\* Personal Protection**

- > Digital photographs of children will appear on the school website. Individual children will not be named. Audio or video clips of students will be included on the school website and may also feature as part of the Scoil Mhuire Social Media presence. Such audio and video clips will focus on groups and group activities rather than on individual pupils. In certain circumstances, with parental permission, individual children may feature and be named. Tagging of individual children on Social Media sites which may allow identification of, or a link-up with, the personal Social Media presence of the child is not allowed under any circumstance.
- > Parental permission is required where a class project involves the use of Skype or any other live video chat media where students may be visible to persons outside of the school.
- > Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will not be circulated.

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**\* Sanctions**

- > Misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action, including written warnings and withdrawal of access privileges. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

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**\* Relationship of the AUP with Other Policies**

- > Pupils from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class are allowed to bring a mobile phone to school but it must be turned off within the school grounds. Pupils are not allowed to use their phones to access the Internet at school.

This policy update was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on 27th September 2016.