

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY 2025 - 2026

This policy has been formulated by Our Lady of Lourdes National School and informs Staff, Parents and Pupils of our Acceptable Use Policy.

1. Introduction

Our Lady of Lourdes NS recognises that access to ICT enhances the opportunity for our pupils and staff to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of their lives. However, just like in the real world, the internet has access to people and certain kinds of information that are unsuitable for children and may potentially have a negative impact on their attitudes, behaviour and well-being. It is important for us to equip our pupils with the necessary information and skills to safely navigate the internet.

This policy applies to all of the school's 'devices' which means all computers, Chromebooks, iPads, laptops and other IT resources that connect to the school's network. This policy applies to staff and pupils of Our Lady of Lourdes NS. The school reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time at its discretion. This policy should be read carefully to ensure that the content is accepted and understood.

2. Rationale

The rationale of this policy is to give guidance and direction for the acceptable use of ICT for teaching, learning and communication as appropriate for all members of the school community in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. If the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

3. Aim

- The aim of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students benefit from the learning opportunities offered by internet access in a safe and positive manner.
- This policy also aims to establish minimum standards for, and allow the pupils and parents know of the school's administration and monitoring of the school's devices, equipment and networks.
- To respect the use of all school ICT equipment and use it responsibly in accordance with school policy.

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.

- Pupils will observe good 'netiquette' (i.e. etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Pupils will use appropriate care and follow rules when working with school devices (see Appendix 3) and school issued accounts (e.g. Google Workspace Accounts).

6. Legislation and Regulation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the internet with which teachers, students and parents/guardians should familiarise themselves where appropriate:

- EU General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Anti-Bullying Guidelines for Primary Schools 2013
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Video Recording Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988
- Interception Act 1993

7. Support Structures and Education

Our Lady of Lourdes NS endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents/guardians and pupils also feel supported in this manner.

- The school will inform pupils and parents/guardians of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.
- On an annual basis, the school will run a programme on acceptable internet usage for pupils and parents/guardians. This will cover several topics including cyber-bullying and will be implemented as part of the SPHE whole school plan.
- Our Lady of Lourdes NS will link in with the Community Garda in relation to Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying annually.
- Parents/Guardians must not use social media, chat groups (e.g. WhatsApp) or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the school community.

- Pupils will not examine, change or use another person's files, username or passwords. They will also not try and impersonate anyone else online.
- Pupils will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving any information, school-related or personal, may be monitored and disciplined accordingly.
- The school takes every reasonable precaution to provide for online safety, but it cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites either deliberately or inadvertently.

Use of Google Drive

- When using Chromebooks, pupils will use approved school accounts under supervision of a teacher.
- Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, passwords, phone numbers or pictures.
- Pupils will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through the internet.

Use of YouTube in the School

The school is now on Level 4 security in the Broadband School Programme Network. All staff members are expected to adhere to the following set of guidelines:

- Each staff member will ensure that all classroom computers are set at restricted mode: this will be checked by teachers regularly.
- YouTube content will never be shown to students without prior viewing by the staff member
- Children will never be allowed to browse content on YouTube on any device.
- Children will never have unsupervised access to computers, iPads or Chromebooks.

9. Pupil Personal Devices

- Pupils are asked to hand their mobile phones/personal devices to their teacher first thing every morning. The mobile phone/device must be switched off and in a clear plastic bag with the child's name on it. The phone/device will be returned at the end of the school day and is not to be switched on until the pupil leaves the school premises.
- Pupils who are found with phones/personal devices in their possession or turned on during school hours will have them confiscated. They will be kept in the principal's office until the principal contacts the parent/guardian to collect it.

- Inappropriate use including hacking, pirating software, using school resources for non-school commercial activities, soliciting, distributing literature for outside entities, disclosing confidential information of the school, sending inappropriate email or accessing inappropriate websites (such as those advocating hate or violence, containing sexually explicit material promoting illegal activities), or using school resources in a way that violates the letter or spirit of the school's policies or reflects negatively on the school is forbidden.
- Users of the school's information and technology resources must not share passwords. If you allow others to use your password or assigned resource, you will be held responsible for their use.
- Consistent with national laws, the Board of Management reserves the right to monitor the use of its information and technology resources and to take appropriate disciplinary actions, or denying future access privileges in cases of misuse.
- Pupil use of the school's information and technology resources constitutes consent to such monitoring. All such monitoring will be conducted in accordance with law including, where applicable, the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Staff use of the school's information and technology resources constitutes consent to such monitoring. All such monitoring will be conducted in accordance with law including, where applicable, the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- School-issued email addresses for staff should be used for school business and not for personal reasons.
- Staff should not share passwords for digital resources or accounts.

12.Sanctions

- Misuse of the internet or any activity which is in contravention with this policy, may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, where appropriate, suspension or expulsion in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- Access to the Internet will be withdrawn from pupils who fail to maintain acceptable standards of use.

Appendix 1:

Acceptable Use Policy Agreement for Pupils:

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet. I will use the internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school.

Pupil's Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

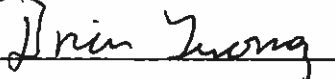
6. Class teachers will be notified by the SEN Department of all pupils using assistive technology so they can determine, in conjunction with the pupil, Special Needs Assistant (where applicable) and the SEN Department, how the technology can be used.
7. Devices are provided for educational purposes only.

HOW LAPTOPS/IPADS (ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY) ARE TO BE USED

1. Permission for the pupil to use assistive technology will only be granted by the SEN Department on receipt of a signed copy of the Parental/Guardian Procedure for Use of Assistive Technology Form.
2. All school laptops must have anti-virus software installed. The school will undertake to update the antivirus software when required. The pupils must not tamper with this, or any other, software installed by Our Lady of Lourdes NS.
3. Careful storage of all technology is required for safe keeping and due care must be shown to prevent unnecessary damage to devices, e.g. laptop must be stored in a protective case and put into locked storage when not being used.
4. The pupil must endeavour to do no untoward damage to the assistive technology. They should treat it safely and respectfully. No food or drink should be consumed when using the equipment. Similarly, the identifying labels for each piece of technology must not be removed.
5. When the device/equipment is not in use on the school property, the assistive technology should be stored in a locked locker or in a storage space designated by the SEN Department.
6. It is the responsibility of the pupil and parent to ensure that their laptop is charged at home and has a full battery while in school.
7. All assistive technology must be carried between school and home by the pupil in a suitable protective carry case. It is the responsibility of the pupil or their parents/guardians to fund the cost of a carry case if one was not granted with the technology by the DES.
8. If the device is used at home, it should be monitored by a responsible adult.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management.

Date: 30/9/2025

Chairperson: 

4. The technology should be solely used by the pupil and for the purposes of school work. No other individuals in the home should have cause to use it.
5. Homework, if completed on a laptop, must be printed at home or shared with the teacher.
6. All laptops must have antivirus software installed. The school will undertake to update the antivirus software when required. The pupils must not tamper with this, or any other, software installed by Our Lady of Lourdes NS.
7. The identifier labels on the equipment should never be removed.
8. Specific time will be dedicated to support pupils in the use of their assistive technology. However, parents and pupils are responsible for developing and maintaining typing skills.
9. We ask that parents/guardians monitor carefully the use of laptops while in the home. They should be used mainly to enhance typing skills and assist with homework. Internet usage should be kept to a minimum and directly related to school activities.
10. When assistive technology is not in use on the school campus, it is to be securely stored and locked in a specific area designated by the SEN Department.
11. Laptops are to be charged every evening at home to ensure laptops can be used throughout the school day and avoid a pupil being without a laptop should it have to be charged.
12. If you need to supplement technology funded by the DES, you may be entitled to claim tax (VAT currently approx. 23%) back on assistive technology devices/software and the hardware required to use it. More information on the process is available at www.citizensinformation.ie

Please feel free to contact the school if you wish to discuss the use of assistive technology.

Please complete the agreement attached and return it to the Principal. Once the completed agreement is returned to the school, your daughter will be granted access to the technology.

Yours sincerely,

Mercedes Campion - Principal

Claire O'Brien - SEN Co-Ordinator/Deputy Principal

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____