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**1. Background:**

This policy has been jointly formulated in consultation with all stakeholders in Convent Primary School, Newport, Co. Tipperary.

To enable progression and continuity we must have suitable machines; this includes the upgrading of the hardware and the software where needed and when manageable. The manageability is determined by available finance and realistic demands on staff time.

**2. Pupils Skills**

Pupils are given basic skills teaching through time spent working on the computer. Pupils are encouraged to use ICT in a variety of situations and contexts:

* Within the curricular areas of Language, Mathematics, SESE, Art and Music most particularly.
* To develop transferable skills to encourage them to gain confidence to experiment with unfamiliar software.
* To gain experience in the following areas of ICT: communicating and handling information, using graphics, charts, databases and spreadsheets.
* To develop critical awareness of ICT within society to support the development of the above skills.

**3. Skills Support**

To support the progression of skills for the pupils we endeavour to:

* Expose pupils to the use of ICT in as many subject areas and contexts as possible. This will increase as pupils and teachers get more confident and begin to extend the incorporation of ICT into their schemes of work.
* Use a wide and expanding range of software and ICT equipment as appropriate, manageable and affordable.
* Encourage pupils to increase their depth of knowledge of software as they gain in confidence.
* Teach pupils to use ICT equipment and software confidently and purposefully to communicate and handle information and to support their problem solving, recording and expressive work.
* Teach pupils to become discerning in their use of ICT, select information, sources and media for their suitability of purpose and to assess the value of ICT in their work practices.

Our school believes guidance is important as pupils begin to learn to take responsibility for their work and progress. Work must be sufficiently challenging, meet the needs of all individuals and provide a balance between teacher-directed and self-directed work. Teacher confidence is critical within the realm of ICT for them to feel confident enough to allow the pupils to develop at their own rate.

Teachers encourage discussion and sharing of ideas when appropriate to the work. Teachers conduct lessons within an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Pupils are encouraged to take ‘risks’ and try new things with their work. Active involvement of pupils in their learning helps to foster independent thinking and informed planning - we view this as crucial for pupils to exploit the ICT facilities to the maximum.

Pupils are encouraged to make informed choices at appropriate points. The aim is not to inhibit pupils by placing a ceiling on their target.

We aspire to provide pupils of all abilities access to rewarding ICT that is able to support and enhance their learning across the curriculum. The mode of delivery must remain flexible so as to address the various needs of the pupils in the classroom. Where appropriate, a variety of ICT facilities are made available to encourage pupils of all abilities to experiment and progress.

The importance of ICT as a cross-curricular tool is recognised. The school aims to expose the pupils to the diversity, influence and uses of ICT. All curriculum areas are identified as having the possibility for pupils to make use of ICT within the subject areas.

**3a Special Needs**

It is acknowledged that extensive ICT support is required for the delivery of the Reading Recovery and learning support within the school.

Technology is used with individual pupils and to support teachers to assist those with special educational needs in accordance with best practice guidelines.

**4. Strategies**

Strategies for ensuring the achievement of ICT policy through providing – in an ongoing manner - suitable resources to support and develop ICT plan, such as:

* Ongoing suitable training for teachers.
* Stand alone computers in each classroom.
* E-beam Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) for each mainstream classroom (Promethean IWB in Junior Infants Room 1 as a result of mobile phone collections)
* Wired Broadband Internet Access in all rooms
* Develop website and class blogs / wiki
* Employ ICT to maximise the use of learning resources in the school.
* Employ ICT for school administrative, planning and review functions.

**5. Activities designed to develop computing abilities:**

* Text handling: Use of word processors to compose, edit and revise text.
* Information handling: Use of databases, spreadsheets, word processors, graph plotting to store, display and analyse information.
* Sound and graphics: Use of computer systems to compose and play music, use of drawing and design packages in the visual arts.
* Picture and Video: Use of digital imaging – still and motion – with ICT to develop/display projects.

**6. Impact and value of ICT:**

* Learning about and discussing the applications of computer software from their own uses and by considering uses outside school.
* Generation of text, editing and revising text, composition of pages, booklets, news sheets and reports, sending and retrieving e-mail, developing awareness of use of new technologies in mass media.
* Using spreadsheets and other generic packages to solve numerical problems, using computers to investigate patterns, carrying out investigations and problem solving activities based upon computer simulations.
* Using word processors to produce a report, using database to store, process and retrieve information, using spreadsheets to store, analyse and interpret data, using simulations to investigate scientific and technological process, geographical phenomena, and historical events; investigating and considering the effects of new technologies.
* Using word processors to generate text; develop an appreciation of the ethical and moral issues associated with the use of computers.

**7. Internet Use**

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 therefore guidelines will be followed when using the internet. These guidelines are contained in the school Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for ICT.

**9. Policy Review and Ratification:**

All our school policies are subject to annual appraisal and review by staff, Parents’ Council and Pupils’ Council as appropriate, and final ratification by the Board of Management. As new initiatives are regularly attempted, not least in ICT, those that become established are included in policy for the following year. This approach seeks to promote the organic development of curriculum provision and to promote and encourage the trying of new things, as outlined above.

**ICT Acceptable Use Policy**

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 Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

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

This version of the AUP was created in October 2010 by staff, parents and Board of Management

### 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.
* Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
* 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.
* Students will observer good netiquette, treating others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

### World Wide Web

* Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
* Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
* Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
* Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
* Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
* Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school’s acceptable use policy.
* Students 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.

### Email

* Students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
* Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
* 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.

**Internet Chat**

* Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.
* Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
* Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
* Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via Internet chat will be forbidden.

### School Website

* Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school’s website
* The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
* Website using facilities such as guestbooks, noticeboards or weblogs will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details
* The publication of student 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.
* The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website with out the parental permission. Video clips may be password protected.
* Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
* The school website will avoid publishing the first name and last name of individuals in a photograph.
* The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use pupils’ names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
* 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 text 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.

### 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 (Amendment) Act 2003
* Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
* Interception Act 1993
* Video Recordings Act 1989
* The Data Protection Act 1988

### 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 may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

### Permission Form

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy, sign and return this permission form to the Principal.

***Name of Pupil:*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***Class/Year:*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Pupil**

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**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:

### Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

**I accept the above paragraph** □ **I do not accept the above paragraph** □

*(Please tick as appropriate)*

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child’s schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing children’s work on the school website.

**I accept the above paragraph** □ **I do not accept the above paragraph** □

 *(Please tick as appropriate)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**October 2010**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Internet Permission Form**

As part of the school’s education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet. This allows students access to a large array of online educational resources that we believe can greatly enhance students’ learning experience.

However, access to and use of the Internet requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school’s Acceptable Use Policy (enclosed). It is important that this enclosed document is read carefully, signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the school.

Although the school takes active steps to promote safe use of the Internet, it recognises the possibility that students may accidentally or deliberately access inappropriate or objectionable material.

The school respects each family’s right to decide whether or not to allow their children access to the Internet as defined by the school’s Acceptable Use Policy.

Having read the terms of our school’s Acceptable Use Policy, you may like to take a moment to consider how the Internet is used in your own home, and see if there is any way you could make it safer for your own family.

Yours sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Miriam Foley (Principal)

## Advice for Parents on ICT in the Home

During school hours, teachers will guide pupils toward appropriate materials on the internet. Outside school, parents or guardians should bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they normally would with other information sources, such as television, magazines etc.

Parents or guardians should be aware that the internet service provider at home may not be filtered.

It is therefore important that these guidelines are followed:

* Discuss rules for using the internet with your children and decide together when, how long and what comprises appropriate use.
* Be aware of the sites your children are visiting and discuss with them what they are learning.
* Ensure that children do not give out personal identifying information on the internet such as a picture, address, phone number, school name or financial information such as credit card or bank details.
* Encourage your children not to respond to any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages and to inform you if they receive any such messages or images.
* Appropriate home use of internet can be educationally beneficial and can make a useful contribution to home and school work. It should however be supervised and parents be aware that they are responsible for their children’s use of the internet resources at home.