

Gaelscoil na Móna

Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies Policy

This policy is based on and complies with DENI Circular 2007/1 on Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools

Introduction

In Gaelscoil na Móna we believe that, when used appropriately, the internet and other digital technologies are invaluable tools in learning in the 21st Century. Gaelscoil na Móna provides opportunities for children to use and learn from the internet and other digital technologies across the curriculum.

The above circular states that:

"Used well, digital technologies are powerful, worthwhile educational tools; technical safeguards can partly protect users, but education in safe, effective practices is a key goal for schools."

Aim of this policy

This document sets out the policy and practices for the safe and effective use of the internet in Gaelscoil na Móna. The policy has been drawn up by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

It has been approved by the Safeguarding Team and the Board of Governors and circulated to all parents.

The policy and its implementation will be reviewed biennially.

Code of Safe Practice

When using the Internet, email systems and digital technologies, all users must comply with all relevant legislation on copyright, property theft, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity. The Code of Safe Practice for Gaelscoil na Móna (below) makes explicit to all users (staff and pupils) what is safe and acceptable and what is not.

The scope of the Code covers fixed and mobile Internet; school PCs, laptops, and digital video equipment. It should also be noted that the use of devices owned personally by staff and pupils but brought onto school premises (such as

mobile phones, camera phones, PDAs) is subject to the same requirements as technology provided by the school.

The Safeguarding Team will monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Practice, particularly in the light of new developments in technology.

Code of Practice for pupils

Pupil access to the Internet is through a filtered service provided by C2K, which should ensure educational use made of resources is safe and secure, while protecting users and systems from abuse. In addition, Gaelscoil na Móna has adopted the following measures to ensure our pupils do not access any inappropriate material:

- The school's Code of Practice for use of the Internet and other digital technologies is made explicit to all pupils and is displayed prominently;
- Our Code of Practice is reviewed each school year and signed by pupils/parents;
- Pupils using the Internet will normally be working in highly-visible areas of the school;
- All online activity is for appropriate educational purposes and is supervised;
- Pupils will, where possible, use sites pre-selected by the teacher and appropriate to their age group;
- Pupils are educated in the safe and effective use of the internet by the process of reviewing the Code of Practice

It should be accepted, that however rigorous these measures may be, they can never be 100% effective. Neither the school nor C2K can accept liability under such circumstances.

The use of mobile phones by pupils is not normally permitted on the school premises during school hours, unless in exceptional circumstances, where permission may be granted by a member of staff.

During school hours pupils are forbidden to play computer games or access social networking sites, unless specifically assigned by the teacher.

Sanctions

Incidents of technology misuse which arise will be dealt with in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Minor incidents will be dealt with by the Principal and may result in a temporary or permanent ban on Internet use. Incidents involving child protection issues will be dealt with in accordance with school child protection procedures.

Code of practice for staff

Staff have agreed to the following Code of Safe Practice:

- Pupils accessing the Internet should supervised by an adult at all times.
- All pupils are aware of the rules for the safe and effective use of the Internet. These are displayed in classrooms and discussed with pupils.
- Any websites used by pupils should be checked beforehand by teachers to ensure there is no unsuitable content and that material is age-appropriate.
- Deliberate/accidental access to inappropriate materials or any other breaches of the school code of practice should be reported immediately to the Principal/Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- In the interests of system security, staff passwords should only be shared with the C2K Coordinator if necessary
- Teachers are aware that the C2K system tracks all Internet use and records the sites visited. The system also logs emails and messages sent and received by individual users.
- Teachers should be aware of copyright and intellectual property rights and should be careful not to download or use any materials which are in breach of these.
- Photographs of pupils should, where possible, be taken with a school camera and images should be stored on a centralised area on the school network, accessible only to teaching staff.
- School systems may not be used for unauthorised commercial transactions.

Internet Safety Awareness

In Gaelscoil na Móna we believe that, alongside having a written safety policy and code of practice, it is essential to educate all users in the safe and effective use of the Internet and other forms of digital communication. We see education in appropriate, effective and safe use as an essential element of the school curriculum. This education is as important for staff and parents as it is for pupils.

Internet Safety Awareness for pupils

Rules for the Acceptable use of the Internet are discussed with all pupils and are prominently displayed in classrooms.

Internet Safety Awareness for staff

The C2K Coordinator keeps informed and updated on issues relating to Internet Safety and attends regular courses. This training is then disseminated to all teaching staff, classroom assistants and supervisory assistants on a regular basis.

Internet Safety Awareness for parents

The Internet Safety Policy and Code of practice for pupils is sent home for parental signature.

Community Use of School ICT Resources

The school's ICT facilities are not available as a community resource.

Health and Safety

Gaelscoil na Móna has endeavoured to ensure a safe working environment for pupils and teachers using ICT resources, both in classrooms and throughout the school. Pupils are supervised at all times when interactive whiteboards and digital equipment are being used.

Digital and Video Images of Pupils

On admission to Gaelscoil na Móna parental permission is sought to use photographs of pupils on the school website, in the local press and for displays etc within school.

School Website

Gaelscoil na Móna intends to develop a school website.. In order to minimise risks of any images of pupils on the school website being used inappropriately the following steps are taken:

- Group photos will be used where possible, with general labels/captions;
- Names and images will be kept separate – if a pupil is named their photograph will not be used and vice-versa;
- The website will not include home addresses, telephone numbers, personal e-mails or any other personal information about pupils or staff.

Storage of images

Digital and video images of pupils are, where possible, taken with school equipment. Images are stored on a centralised area on the school network, accessible only to teaching staff.

Social Software

Chatrooms, blogs and other social networking sites are blocked by the C2K filters so pupils do not have access to them in the school environment. However, we regard the education of pupils on the safe and responsible use of social software as vitally important and this is addressed through our Personal Development programme. Instances of cyber bullying of pupils or staff will be regarded as very serious offences and dealt with according to the school's discipline policy and child protection procedures. Pupils are aware that any misuse of mobile phones/websites/email should be reported to a member of staff immediately.

Parental agreement

Having read the school's Internet acceptable use policy parents are asked to discuss with their child, sign and return our ICT Code of Practice Agreement for Pupils and Parents.