St Michael's House Special School Foxfield

Internet
Acceptable Use Policy

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Introduction

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. It can also be a powerful motivator to students at St Michael's House Special School Foxfield. However, some material available on the internet is unsuitable for children and therefore these guidelines will be followed when using the internet.

Aim of Policy:

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) 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.

Parental Approval:

The Internet AUP is available for parents. If parents/guardians have concerns about the Internet AUP they are advised to contact the School Principal in order to have their concerns addressed.

Internet Safety Strategy:

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximize learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher or SNA
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems are used in order to minimize the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. This filtering system is used in connection with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) (www.ncte.ie).
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.

World Wide Web:

- The School has restricted access to the world wide web and only sites of General and Educational interest are accessible. Inappropriate sites have been blocked by Fortinet (as detailed above).
- Pupils will be supervised by the teacher or SNA when using the web.
- Pupils will use the web for educational and reinforcement purposes.
- Although generally not within pupils' ability, staff will ensure pupils will never disclose or publicise personal information.

Email and Chat Rooms:

- Pupils in this school would generally not have the cognitive ability to send or receive emails. If they have the capability, email should only be used for particular educational purposes e.g. requesting information for a project.
- Pupils will only be allowed email in the presence of the teacher or SNA.
- Pupils in this school would generally not have the cognitive ability to access Internet Chat Rooms. If they have the capability, pupils will never be allowed to access Internet Chat Rooms.

- All teachers have been allocated a school email address through Google Suite. This is a secure, password protected email address. Teachers must only use this email address and Google Drive for school business.

School Website (www.foxfieldsmh.ie)

- Pupils may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork, or school work on the World Wide Web in accordance with 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.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated with the class teacher.
- Personal pupil information including full names, home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Staff Use of Computer Facilities:

- School Personnel can access the web for educational and professional purposes throughout the day.

- Equally, School Personnel who are engaged in after school activities should restrict their use of the web to professional and educational purposes only while pupils are present.
- If a staff member wishes to access the web for personal purposes it should be done outside of pupil-teacher contact time.
- Any students on placement from the teacher training Colleges, transition year pupils or students on a work experience placement can only have access to the computer facilities under the supervision of the class teacher. Permission should be sought from the class teacher prior to use.
- Use of the internet by staff members to access inappropriate material whether it be pornographic, racist or offensive, is strictly prohibited at all times. No person will in any way alter the filtering preferences.

Distance learning/distance meetings:

In circumstances where teaching and learning cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers may use online platforms such as Aladdin Connect, Zoom, SeeSaw, WhatsApp or other online platforms approved by the Principal, to fulfil the school's obligation for the continuity of teaching and learning.

The school has signed up to the terms of service of these 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.

When teachers are using Zoom or other video platforms, parents/guardians must accompany their child at all times. Parents/guardians, along with staff, must agree to abide by security protocols (i.e. not recording or taking screen shots without consent). Live or recorded Zoom or other video interactions, must not be recorded by a third party.

Participants, such as school staff, parents/guardians and/or any members of the school associated clinical team of meetings via Zoom or other video platforms must agree to abide by security protocols (i.e. not recording or taking screen shots without consent). Meetings must not be recorded by a third party.

Sanctions:

Misuse of the Internet by members of staff or the school is not expected but if it occurs it may result in disciplinary action, including verbal and 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. Staff misuse of the Internet will be dealt with through disciplinary action procedures by the Board of Management.

Ratification and Review

This policy has been approved by the Patron Body and was ratified by the Board of Management on ……………………….. The policy will be made available to all parents/guardians and educational professionals on our website and on request from the school. The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Signed: …………………………………………………….

Chairperson, BOM.