



Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
Scoil Mhuire Strokestown

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Section 1 - Rationale

We have formulated the following Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in accordance with the school's fundamental aim to foster in students a sense of independence, cooperation and responsibility and to provide them with skills for lifelong learning where the school believes that access to the school's ICT resources plays an important role.

The Internet is a powerful educational resource that can significantly enhance teaching and learning when used appropriately. The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Strokestown is committed to providing access to Internet facilities in the school for precisely that purpose. However, there are many potential dangers associated with the use of the Internet. It is the responsibility of the Board of Management to protect all users of the school internet facilities, particularly students of our school, from these dangers. It is also the responsibility of the Board of Management to comply with Irish Legislation in this area:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988 and 2018.

This policy governing access to and use of the Internet by students & staff of the school outlines practices and procedures. It is also intended to provide maximum protection for users from potential dangers associated with the use of the Internet following current GDPR guidelines.

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) aims to ensure that staff & students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources safely and effectively.

Internet use and access are considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn, and appropriate sanctions will be imposed as outlined in the AUP and the Code of Behaviour.

Google Classroom & Remote Learning

Scoil Mhuire is a Google school. Every student has been provided with a school email address. This is the official email address for accessing Google classroom for learning. The school domain @scoilmhuirostrokestown.ie **will not** recognise email addresses from outside this domain, and access to Google Classrooms **will be denied**.

Section 2 - Content Filtering, Web Browsing & Downloading

The HEAnet school's team manages Scoil Mhuire Strokestown's internet access. This partnership provides for the blocking of access to websites belonging to the personal websites and Social Networking category.

Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher.

Students are encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to their tutor.

Students and staff will not copy information from the Internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the content source.

Students and staff will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and network management reasons.

Students will only use the Scoil Mhuire Strokestown internet connection for educational and career development activities.

Students will not download or view any illegal, obscene, or defamatory material intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Use of file sharing and torrent sites are only allowed under teacher supervision.

Section 3 – Teaching and Learning Platform

Scoil Mhuire Strokestown uses the GSuite Platform and the Google Classroom application to facilitate online Teaching and Learning.

Students should use this platform and associated applications for any school-related communication.

The preferred platform for video conferencing is Google Meet.

All school community members should understand that all standard school policies are still applicable in an online teaching and learning environment.

Scoil Mhuire will implement appropriate security and access controls. In addition, teachers will control who joins the online class (Students and invited parents/guardians).

Scoil Mhuire will consider the circumstances in which the school or teachers will allow students to share video/audio streams. It is nearly always best practice that students join with the camera and microphone disabled.

Section 4 - Email & Messaging

The school will encourage all Students and teachers to use their assigned email accounts (@scoilmhuiresstrokestown.ie). This email is valid for the students' time in Scoil Mhuire. Student accounts will be suspended/deactivated one year after the student has completed senior cycle. Reminder emails will be sent to students before accounts are deleted. In the event a student leaves school before completing senior cycle their account will be valid for one month following their departure. Teachers' accounts will be suspended/deactivated three months after they leave the school. Reminder emails will similarly be sent.

The use of personal email accounts is acceptable in agreed circumstances. (E.G. Applying to College/UCAS, Career & character references).

Students should not, under any circumstances, share their email account login details with other pupils. In addition, Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, Students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.

Section 5 - Social Media

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of Students and other staff and the school's reputation is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example, Facebook), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chat rooms, forums, podcasts, open-access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia and content sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube. The Internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services by students and staff at Scoil Mhuire Strokestown:

- Members of the school community must not use social media and the Internet to harass, insult, abuse, or defame pupils, their family members, staff, or other members of the Scoil Mhuire community.
- Members of the school community must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff, and other school community members on social media.
- Members of the school community must not use school email addresses to set up personal social media accounts or communicate through such media.
- Members of the school community must not engage in activities involving social media, which might bring the school into disrepute
- Members of the school community must not represent their personal views as the views of Scoil Mhuire on any social medium.

Section 6 - Personal Devices, Mobile Phones & Phones connected to Smart Devices

- At Scoil Mhuire, we recognise the positive role that mobile phones can play in our daily lives, providing a means of communication and personal convenience. However, we are also mindful of the potential negative impact that excessive use of social media and mobile devices can have on students' wellbeing in early adolescence. In light of this, the Principal reserves the right to collect mobile phones from students in junior year groups (First Year to Third Year) at the start of each school day. Phones will be securely stored and returned to students at the end of the day. This measure aims to help students focus on their studies, reduce distractions, and foster a more balanced school environment.
- Senior students are permitted to have their mobile phones during the school day; however, they must be used in accordance with this policy in the same way as if they were using school equipment.
- Students are only allowed to use mobile phones during lessons with expressed permission from teaching staff. Students may carry their mobile phones on their person in silent mode only (please turn off notifications).
- The one exception to this rule is during exams when the exam rules will supersede this policy. Mobile phones and all other smart devices e.g. watches, glasses etc., should NEVER be brought into an exam, and exam papers will be cancelled if a student has done so.
- Phones should not be used between classes, before classes, etc.

- If a student needs to contact home urgently, they will be allowed to use the phone in the main office. Likewise, if parents need to reach their children urgently, they should phone the main office.
- If a student breaches these rules, the phone will be confiscated immediately and sanctions will apply (ref to Disciplinary Policy).
- If there is a dispute about whether these rules have been breached, the phone shall be handed over immediately to the teacher, who will give it to senior management to investigate the matter.
- At all times, the privacy of a student shall be respected. Where the data on the phone is accessed, it shall only be to determine whether there has been misuse of the phone, not to monitor the personal activities of the owner.
- If a phone disturbs a class or if a student is seen using a phone outside the permitted time: The phone will be confiscated, and the Code of Behaviour sanctions will be enacted.
- If a phone has been used to take photographs/audio or video footage: The phone will be confiscated until the matter can be resolved.
- If the material has been taken without the consent of the subject(s) therein, the student responsible will be referred to the Code of Behaviour and/or the BOM, where appropriate sanctions such as suspension may occur.
- If the material has been taken without the consent of the subject(s) therein and subsequently posted on the Internet, shown to others or distributed in any manner, the student responsible may be suspended and may be recommended for permanent exclusion from the School.
- Depending on the nature of the content viewed, Scoil Mhuire Strokestown reserves the right to contact relevant outside bodies (Gardai, legal advice, HSE, etc.) to determine the appropriate course of action.

Exempt occasions

There are certain events in the life of the School where it is usual and reasonable for photographs to be taken and where the explicit consent of the subject therein would usually not be required. These include concerts, sports events, T.Y. activities, trips, etc. However, students should use discretion as to what is appropriate and must continue to be highly cautious about posting anything to the Internet or showing it to others without the explicit consent of those involved. If they are in any doubt about what is appropriate, the guidance of a member of staff should be sought in advance. If their actions are deemed inappropriate in the opinion of the school, the sanctions outlined above shall apply.

Section 7 - Images & Video

The development of digital imaging technologies has created significant benefits to learning, allowing staff and students instant use of images that they have recorded themselves or downloaded from the Internet. However, staff, parents/guardians and students need to be aware of the risks associated with publishing digital images on the Internet. Such images may allow harassment or breaches of privacy to occur. Digital images may remain available on the Internet forever and may cause harm to individuals in the short or long term. Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute. At Scoil Mhuire Strokestown, students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Taking photos or videos on the grounds of Scoil Mhuire Strokestown or when participating in school activities is allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or students of Scoil Mhuire. Taking photos or videos on the grounds of Scoil Mhuire or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from the staff.

Students must not share images, videos, or other content online to harm another school community member, regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.

Sharing explicit images of students and minors is unacceptable and prohibited, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. In addition, sharing graphic images of other students will result in an automatic referral to the Code of Behaviour and the BOM where appropriate sanctions such as suspension may occur.

Section 8 - Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (I.M.), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. Cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact. Cyberbullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock, and the pupils' homes may not even be a haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. These technologies mean digital content can be shared and seen by a vast audience almost instantly and is nearly impossible to delete permanently. So while cyberbullying often occurs at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for schools, Scoil Mhuire Strokestown considers that a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

- When using the Internet, pupils, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect.
- Engaging in online activities to harm, harass, or embarrass another student or member of staff is an unacceptable and prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.
- Scoil Mhuire Strokestown takes measures to ensure that staff and Students know that bullying is defined as unwanted negative verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and repeated over time. This definition includes cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, following the Schools Code of Behaviour.

Section 9 - School Website/Social Sites

- will be allowed to publish projects, artwork or school work, following clear policies and approval processes regarding the content.
- Scoil Mhuire Social sites will be regularly checked to ensure that no content compromises students' safety, privacy, reputation, or staff.
- Social Media accounts allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.
- A teacher will coordinate the publication of student work on school Social Sites.

- Personal student information, including home address and contact details, will not be published on Scoil Mhuire Strokestown Social sites.

Section 10- Sanctions

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

Scoil Mhuire will deal with incidents outside the School that impact the well-being of Students or staff under this policy and associated Codes of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. In such cases, the school will inform parents/guardians of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of the school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Students taking steps to bypass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means will be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and will result in an automatic referral to the Code of Behaviour and/or the BOM where appropriate sanctions such as suspension may occur.

Students should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication.

Scoil Mhuire Strokestown implements the following strategies for promoting safer use of the Internet:

- Students will be provided with education in internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE, CSPE and DML curriculum. This provision will be presented through the Well Being Programme.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to Students in Scoil Mhuire.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety
- Sanctions specific to Personal Devices & Mobile Phones are outlined in Section 5 of this policy.
- This policy recognises and respects the importance of The Schools Child Protection Policy concerning all I.T. usage & safety.

Section 11 – Cloud Parents app/ Compass login for Parents/Guardians

Scoil Mhuire uses a service provider (www.Compass.net) to manage administration, and parents will be provided with a username and password for the app/website. This will provide parents with information relating to their child's attendance, behaviour and reports.

It is important that Parents/Guardians have exclusive access to these login details, and it is not shared with others.

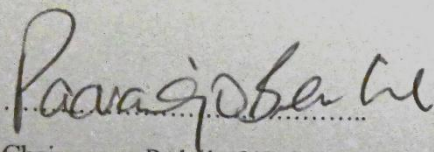
Parents/guardians are responsible for regularly checking their accounts as it is seen as an important means of communication.

Parental Responsibilities:

- We recommend parents monitor students' use of Internet-enabled devices when not in school, particularly during homework and study times.
- We recommend parents regularly inspect students' Internet-enabled devices and the installed Apps to ensure that there is no inappropriate material on it or any inappropriate user.

Section 12 - Permissions

All students who enrol at Scoil Mhuire Strokestown agree to follow the Schools Acceptable Use Policy.


Chairperson Padraig O'Beirne
Date: 14.05.2025
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