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# Castlegar NS

## Internet Acceptable Use Policy

**Date of Commencement: 25/01/2023**

**Author: Staff of Castlegar NS**



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## General Approach

The aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, agreed sanctions will be imposed.

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

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

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:

- Department of Education filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software/apps will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission and all external software must be scanned with anti-virus software before use.
- Virus protection software (Avast) will be used and updated on a regular basis.



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- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Castlegar NS.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in Castlegar NS.

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.

Castlegar NS implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in Castlegar NS by teaching staff.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Information and classes will be provided for parents on internet safety, attendance is strongly advised.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

**Board of Management, teaching staff, support staff, pupils, and parents**

This policy has been developed by the staff of Castlegar NS and ratified by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.



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The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the in-school management team.

## Content Filtering

Castlegar NS has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

**Level 4 This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking category.**

Students taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.



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## Internet Use

Students in all classes will be provided with Google accounts with the handle @castlegarns.ie. This account will have the email functionality disabled (i.e. **children do not have access to Gmail, they cannot send or receive emails**).

This account is managed by the school through Google for Education Admin Console. It allows students to create a safe, online portfolio of their work and allows them to collaborate with others on work.

This account may only be used for educational purposes; school work, homework, project work or as guided by the teacher.

Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.

Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials to their class teacher or any member of staff in accordance with school procedures.

Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).

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/or network management reasons.

Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only and/or as deemed appropriate by teachers e.g. Rewards etc.

Students will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.

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

Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies without permission is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.

Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.



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Students will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.

Websites such as imagebank.ie, photosforclass.com, kiddle, duckduckgo and instagrok are advised as safe search engines that offer an alternative to google.

**Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.**

**Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is allowed only with staff permission.**

## **Email and Messaging**

At the date of writing, access to email is disabled for all students. Students in senior classes (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>) may be granted access to email at a later date if and when this occurs the following applies;

**The use of student school email accounts is only allowed at Castlegar NS with expressed permission from members of the teaching staff.**

- Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other pupils.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
- Students will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students should be aware that email communications are monitored.

Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

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.



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

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

Students will not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or "reply all without the permission of the originator

Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school based work.

Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.

Students should 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. Pupils should report any such communications to a teacher.

All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.





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## Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of your school community are expected to follow when using 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 pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, mircoblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us 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 in Castlegar NS:

- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is only permitted with the express permission from teaching staff.

All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.

Staff and students must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Castlegar NS community on social media.

Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.



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Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Castlegar NS into disrepute.

Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as being those of Castlegar NS on any social medium.

Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

## **Personal Devices**

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Castlegar NS:

- Students are not allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into Castlegar NS.

## **Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)**

Castlegar NS digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.

Students must only use their school account for accessing the school digital learning platform.

Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.

All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.

The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).

Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.



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Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.

Personal email addresses may not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.

Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

## **Images and Video**

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 Castlegar NS students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or pupils of Castlegar NS.

Written permission from parents or carers is obtained, upon enrolment, before photographs of students are published on the school website.

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

Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of students automatically results in the Gardai being contacted and potential expulsion pending investigation.



## Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- Misuse and fraud legislation
- Racist material
- Pornography
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute
- Using school systems to run a private business
- Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

NOTE: this list is not exhaustive.



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## School Websites

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.

Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

Webpages 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.

Castlegar NS will only use digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities, celebrating individual or group achievements.

The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Castlegar NS web pages.

Castlegar NS will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online.



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## Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, 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. As 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 may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Castlegar NS considers that a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social 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.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times.

Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another student or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken by Castlegar NS to ensure that staff and students are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyberbullying even when it happens outside the school or at night. In addition, the Department of Education Anti-Bullying



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Procedures, 2013 defines cyberbullying as “placing 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”.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.



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## 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 Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

### 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 and digital technologies may result in disciplinary action according to the school's Cod of Behaviour, and/or Anti-Bullying Policy and or the Child Protection Policy.

The code of Behaviour includes written warning, notification of parents, 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, including An Garda Síochána and/or TUSLA.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)





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## Permission Form

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy, sign each section and return this permission form to the Principal as soon as possible.

I agree to follow the school’s Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet and digital technologies. I will use the internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the procedures outlined in the policy.

**Class(es):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Student’s signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the **Internet Acceptable Use Policy** and I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes only. 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 students access unsuitable websites.

**Parent/Guardian signature:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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I agree to allow my child to be provided with a **Google for Education account** for educational purposes only which will have the **email feature disabled**. Please note this account will take the form of an email address using @castlegarns.ie, despite this, please rest assured Gmail has been disabled for all children’s accounts through the Google Admin Console. Each child’s Google account is managed by the school and allows the students to create a **safe**, online portfolio of their work and allows them to collaborate with others on their school work.

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



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## Internet Permission Form

February 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

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 the learning experience. Following on from the Digital Divide Grant, provided to all schools by the Department of Education, we were delighted to be able to invest in a set of Chrome books. To use these to their full educational extent, all students will be provided with a **Google for education account** which will have the **email feature disabled**. Please note this account will take the form of an email address using @castlegarns.ie, despite this, please rest assured Gmail has been disabled for all children's accounts through the Google Admin Console. Each child's Google account is managed by the school and allows the students to create a safe, online portfolio of their work and allows them to collaborate with others on their school work.

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 Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which is available on our school website, in the office for viewing and it has also been emailed to all parents/guardians. It is important that this document is read carefully, and the attached form is signed by each student and by a parent or guardian on each relevant section 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.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Mise le meas,

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Caitriona McCormack  
Principal.