



St. Mary's National  
School  
Dunleckney Road,  
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R21XF96

Telephone: 0599721021  
Email:  
emagee@stmarysnsbagenalstown.ie  
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## St. Mary's National School

### Internet Acceptable Use Policy

**Date of Commencement: 28/04/2026**

**Author: Emer Magee**



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## General Approach

The aim of this 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.

The school recognises the educational value of carefully supervised digital tools within the school setting. This policy does not imply an expectation or recommendation that pupils own or use personal internet-enabled devices outside school.

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 several strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within the school will always be supervised by a teacher.



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This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Mary's National School. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St. Mary's National School.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action as per our Code of Behaviour. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

St. Mary's National School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases St. Mary's National School will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

St. Mary's National School 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 St. Mary's National School.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- St. Mary's National School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

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 a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, students, parents/carers, and representatives of the Board of Management.

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, Mrs. Emer Magee should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by Mrs. Emer Magee.



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## Content Filtering

St. Mary's National School 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.**

- Pupils are not permitted to access websites such as Youtube without the express permission of their teacher. Level 4 filtering is in place to support the controlled use by teachers of YouTube and similar games-based websites to support learning and teaching.
- Filtering systems reduce, but do not eliminate exposure risks. They should not be interpreted as validating unrestricted access to online platforms outside the school environment.
- Students taking steps to bypass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action as per our Code of Behaviour.



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## Internet Use

- 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 in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to Mrs. Magee.
- 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.
- 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 is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- 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.



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## Email and Messaging

**Downloading, by students, of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.**

**The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at St. Mary's National School .**

- Students will use approved school email accounts.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 our 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 X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias 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 St. Mary's National School :

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in St. Mary's National School, on school devices.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is not allowed in St. Mary's National School .
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is permitted with express permission from teaching staff.

While this policy governs behaviour within school, the school recongises growing evidence that social media platforms are not developmentally appropriate for primary-aged children and supports parents in making informed decisions regarding delayed access.

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 St. Mary's National School 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.

Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Mary's National School into disrepute.



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Staff and Students must not represent their personal views as those of St. Mary's National School on any social medium.

Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

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

Students using their own technology in school should follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if they were using school equipment.

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in St. Mary's National School:

- Students are only allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into St. Mary's National School with express permission from the Principal.
- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with express permission from the Principal.

Permission to bring personal internet-enabled devices to school should be regarded as exceptional and does not indicate an expectation that pupils own such devices.

## Mobiles Phones

- The use of, and access to, personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day is banned (Circular 44/2025). This ban does not apply to travel to and from school and following the conclusion of afterschool activities. If, at the request of parents, a child takes a mobile phone to school, **notice should be given to the Principal via email [principal@stmarysnsbagenalstown.ie](mailto:principal@stmarysnsbagenalstown.ie)**. It must be switched off and handed into the office as soon as the child arrives at school.
- This ban supports pupil's concentration, wellbeing and social development during the school day and aligns with best practice recommendations regarding reduced device use in childhood.
- The pupil must request their phone from the office at the end of the school day.
- Pupils who ignore this policy and are found with their phones switched on will be dealt with according to the Code of Behaviour.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones



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

St. Mary's National School's digital learning platform e.g. Seesaw, Aladdin is managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.

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.

Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.

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

Please refer to the school's Remote Teaching and Learning Policy for more specific information in this area.



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## **Audio, Images and Video**

Care should be taken when capturing audio, photographic or video images that learners are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

At St. Mary's National School students must not record audio, take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Recording audio, 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 St. Mary's National School.

Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with express permission from staff.

Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before video, audio or photographs of students are published on the school website.

Students must not share audio, 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/video and in particular explicit images/video of students and/or minors is unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images/video of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.



## **Inappropriate Activities**

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation.
- 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
- 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
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Any other activity considered questionable

## **School Website**

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork 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.
- St. Mary's National School will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on St. Mary's National School web pages.
- The St. Mary's National School 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

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, St. Mary's National School considers that posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can be seen as bullying behaviour.

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, chatrooms 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 cyberbullying. 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 student's 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, St. Mary's National School 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 St. Mary's National School to ensure that staff and students are aware that bullying is defined as targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

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



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In accordance with the Department of Education BÍ Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools; St. Mary's National School considers that a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their BÍ Cineálta Policy.

## Artificial Intelligence

- St. Mary's National School recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.
- St. Mary's National School provides training and professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively utilise AI tools in their teaching practices, ensuring they stay up to date with technological advancements.
- The selection of AI tools and technologies in St. Mary's National School aligns with educational goals, including supporting learner agency and promoting critical thinking.
- AI technologies may be integrated into the curriculum to enhance learner outcomes and experiences.
- St. Mary's National School may integrate AI into its educational processes to enhance learning, foster innovation, and promote the development of critical skills.
- St. Mary's National School will make necessary adjustments to our school's adoption and integration of AI based on review and feedback.
- A regular review of the impact of AI on learning outcomes is to be conducted to ensure continuous improvement.
- School staff and learners receive training on the ethical use of AI technologies, including understanding data privacy, identifying biases, and verifying AI-generated information.
- All AI tools authorised for use in St. Mary's National School comply with data protection regulations (GDPR).
- Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.
- Learners will not create, share or send any AI generated material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Staff and learners must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame learners, their family members, staff, other members of the St. Mary's National School community



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- Staff and learners must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring St. Mary's National School into disrepute.
  - St. Mary's National School promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help learners understand AI, its implications, and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information, and recognising potential biases in AI tools.
  - AI systems used in St. Mary's National School ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.
  - Learners must attribute AI text and images properly when used in assignments/homework.
  - Teachers will attribute AI text and images when used.
  - AI Generated material is allowed for certain activities with prior school permission.

This policy was discussed with staff on: 16/02/2026

This policy was sent to parents for feedback on: 16/02/2026

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 17/02/2026, ratified by the Board of Management on 27/04/2026 and will be reviewed annually.

Signed: Amy M Kidd Chairperson of the Board of Management  
Mrs. Amy Kidd

Date: 28/04/2026

Signed: Emer Magee School Principal  
Mrs. Emer Magee

Date: 28/04/2026



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## Internet Acceptable Use Policy - Permission Form

### 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
- European Digital Services Act 2022

### 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 should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

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.



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Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian : \_\_\_\_\_

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

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and 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 students access unsuitable websites.

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 students' work on the school website.

Parent/ Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

School Name: St. Mary's National School

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_