Technology/ICT Acceptable Usage Policy

1.1 Scope

This policy applies to students of Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin, their parents/guardians and staff of the school.

1.2 Rationale

We in Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin recognise the importance of appropriate use of technology. This policy has been put in place so as all stakeholders recognise the responsibilities they have in relation to technology usage, and to protect our guiding principles of fairness, respect and integrity. Technology is used only as an educational tool in Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin. The school will use various strategies to maximise the learning opportunities and minimise the risks in relation to technology usage.

1.3 Links to the School Ethos

Technology has an important role in learning at Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí leighin. We aim to create a welcoming, safe and ordered learning environment for all pupils, where every support is given to fulfil one's academic, personal, social and moral potential, with self-respect and respect for each other.

1.4 Context

This Policy has been developed and should be read with the school's guiding principles in mind, and in conjunction with Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin's Health and Safety Policy, Child Protection Policy, Pupil Management Policy, Dignity in the Workplace Charter and Anti-Bullying Policy.

1.5 Aims

The aims of this policy are:
   a) To ensure that pupils maximise the benefits to them from the learning opportunities that technology provides;

b) To highlight the responsibilities of all members of the school community;

c) To protect Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin's guiding principles of respect, honesty and integrity.

d) To clarify what acceptable usage is.

2. Policy Content

a) Teachers will regularly monitor internet usage.

b) Filtering software is used to minimise the chances of finding inappropriate material in school.

c) The school will regularly monitor students' iPads.

d) Teachers, parents and students will be educated in safe and responsible use of the internet.

e) Pupils are unable/not permitted to upload/download apps without teacher's permission due to the school Mobile Device Management System.

f) Prior permission from a teacher is necessary when using storage devices from outside of school.

g) Students are expected to respect each other at all times and should avoid any activities that will bring themselves or the school into danger or disrepute.

h) Students will use iPads as an educational resource only.

i) Any attempt made at decoding the wi-fi security code or accessing the school wi-fi without permission of school authorities is forbidden and shall be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

j) Pupils will keep data and passwords to all sites private and shall not share them with anybody else.

k) Pupils will never accept or use another person's password.

l) Pupils will never have pictures of another pupil on their own on their iPad. The only pictures that are permitted are pictures of a group at a school event, where the pupil has received prior permission from the teacher to take the picture.

m) If pupils make a video of another pupil with prior permission of the teacher as part of a lesson, it is the responsibility of the student to erase the video from the iPad before leaving the class.

n) It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to protect their child online when the student is not at school.

o) Students will always adhere to the expectations outlined in this policy.

p) Anyone found misusing technology will have the privilege of its use removed and will have sanctions imposed on them in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

q) Apple Classroom Manager is used in class. Teacher's directions should be followed at all times.

r) iPads should be kept in pupil's bags until otherwise directed by the teacher.

s) iPads should always be lying flat on the table in class, and screens should always be visible to teachers.

3. iPads

Appropriate care should be taken of iPads to avoid breakages or damage:

a) Tough protective covers should always be used. Apple Survivor covers are recommended.

b) iPad batteries should be fully charged coming to school each morning.

c) A soft cloth and only recommended cleaning agent should be used for cleaning screens.

3.1 iPad usage

3.1.1 Parents' and Guardians' responsibilities

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure:

a) That your child's iPad is appropriately insured;

b) That your child's iPad is fully charged and in full working order coming to school daily;

c) That a suitably protective cover is always used;

d) That your child's use of their iPad is monitored outside of school time, particularly during homework and study times;

e) That you speak regularly with your child regarding responsibility online;

f) That iPads are checked regularly to ensure that they do not contain inappropriate material;

g) That inappropriate material is removed immediately;

h) That your child does not use their iPad in bed, and that devices are left at bedtime in a central family area;

i) That you speak regularly with your child regarding staying safe on-line;

j) That you are familiar with, and adhere to the recommendations provided by the school's Internet Safety Training. See Appendix 1, Parent Information Sheet, which is made available to all parents.

3.1.2 Students' Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that:

a) Adequate care is taken to ensure iPads are not lost or broken;

b) A suitably protective cover is used for their iPad;

c) iPads are fully charged on arrival to school daily;

d) A soft cloth and approved laptop cleaning solution is used to clean the iPad screen;

e) Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin's Technology Acceptable Use Policy is adhered to at all times;

f) iPads should be locked into student lockers at all times other than classtime;

g) iPads must not be taken to school events or trips without prior consent of the organizing teacher;

h) Photographs are never taken or recordings are never made without prior consent of a teacher;

i) Damage to, interference with, or issues regarding ownership of iPads should be reported to school authorities immediately on detection;

j) It is the responsibility of the student to report immediately to the school authorities any inappropriate content on their iPad;

k) Only appropriate educational material should be accessed;

l) iPads must be used as an educational tool only;

m) The configuration of the iPad is not changed in any way.

4. The World Wide Web

a) Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin is registered at Filtering Level 4 of PDST's Schools Broadband Network. See Appendix 2.

b) Students will never visit sites containing offensive, inappropriate, explicit or insulting material;

c) Students will report to school authorities if they accidentally visit a site containing aforementioned material;

d) Students will use the internet as an educational resource only;

e) Students will never copy material from the internet for tasks without recognising the source (Copyright Infringement);

f) Students should never make public on the internet their own personal information;

g) It is a direct infringement on this policy to download material and/or images that are not for the student's educational use;

h) Students will understand that the school will monitor internet usage to insure safe and proper use of the internet, and to gather information for enquiries into reports of unacceptable/inappropriate internet usage;

i) Information sessions will be given regularly on Internet Safety.

4.1 E-Mails

a) Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin has a Google Education account, which facilitates each student having a school/Google email address. This must be used for the purpose of sharing school work *only.*

b) Students will never send material by e-mail that could be considered offensive, inappropriate, explicit or insulting, nor should they send material that may threaten or intimidate another person. A student should never accept receiving such material either, and should report it to school management immediately.

c) Students should never distribute their personal information via e-mail, personal information such as names, age, address, pictures, etc.

d) Students will never arrange to meet someone they met via e-mail or on the internet.

e) Teachers may check students school Google accounts regularly.

4.2 Internet Chat

a) Students will only have access to blogs, chat forums and other messaging services that have been approved by the school.

b) Blogs, internet chat forums and other messaging services will only be used for educational purposes, and will always be monitored by teachers.

c) Students should never meet somebody they have met on an internet chat forum.

4.3 School Website

a) Students will have the opportunity to upload images and information in relation to school activities. Any materials uploaded must be done under the supervision of a teacher, and with the prior permission of school management.

b) There will be regular inspection of the school website to ensure it does not contain material which would put a student at risk.

c) Teachers may from time to time upload students work on the school website.

d) Any educational work displayed on the website will be accompanied by a statement of copyright.

e) The school will aim to publish information on the website that will highlight group activities rather than individuals. Should any piece be uploaded about an individual student, prior parental information will be sought.

4.4 Social Media

Unfortunately, there is scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of Social Media sites which can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity while online. This section of the policy has been developed to offer guidance and direction to all members of the school community on the safe and responsible use of Social Media. This is also a reference document for victims of inappropriate or unsolicited comments online. This section has been designed for the following purposes;

a) Produce a set of strategies for students that will allow them to use Social Media safely and responsibly.
b) Protect the integrity and good name of all members of the school community from online abuse.
c) Outline behaviours which are unacceptable and the consequences for engaging in these.
d) Provide guidance for staff, students and parents on the appropriate use of Social Media.
e) Outline procedures for school community members who find themselves the victims of inappropriate social media behaviour.

4.4.1 Safe and Responsible use of Social Media
In the social media world, the line between private and public is not well defined nor is the line between personal and professional.

a) Be selective about what you share. Everything online happens in front of a vast, invisible, and often anonymous audience. Once something is out there, it doesn't go away as it can be copied and forwarded easily and quickly. Everything leaves a digital footprint.
You should never post personal details such as your phone number, email address or home address.

b) Be selective with friends. Be careful who you make friends with online. In general, it is better to restrict friends to people you know and trust in the real world.

c) Never post your location.
Social Media apps lets users post their location on every post. Teens should not do this for safety and privacy reasons. Teens can also "tag" their friends' location but you can prevent anyone from tagging your location in the How Tags Work section.

d) Use strict privacy settings.

Review all of the options on your privacy settings page. Many sites default settings tend to keep information public until a user makes it private

e) If your profile is linked to your mobile phone, you should use the website's privacy settings to ensure that your phone number is not visible.

f) Chat & VoIP services. (These allow for communication that may be typed or spoken with or without webcam access). When using the above you should only communicate with people you trust and remember that other people may be able to view all aspects of the communication.

g) As a rule of thumb if you wouldn't be comfortable posting something (pictures comments etc.) on a noticeboard in the school corridor then don't post it online.

h) If something has been posted that upsets you – tell someone.
If someone is bullying you online, you should:
- Firstly tell your parents/guardian or report it to a teacher at school.
- As in all cases of repeated unwanted aggression you should tell your Class Tutor, Year Head, the Deputy Principal or Principal or any Teacher in the school.
- Keep and save any bullying emails or images you have been sent.
- Take a screenshot of any comments that are threatening.
- Make a note of the time and date that messages or images were sent, along with any details you have about the sender.
- Not reply to any bullying messages or get into any online arguments.

i) Social Media can be useful for organising and discussing class events. It is important that these groups are well managed and are used to share information, whilst protecting the wellbeing of all members of the school community.

j) All members of the school community have a right to their good name being upheld, including parents, pupils and staff. Social media is therefore not an appropriate medium for discussion of alleged incidents in the school, and contact should be made with the School Office if any information regarding alleged incidents is required.

k) Stories, videos, pictures relating to the school should not be shared online, unless originating from a school-approved social media account.

4.4.2 Unacceptable uses of Social Media sites and their consequences.
Users are responsible for their own behaviour when communicating on social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they post on social media locations.
Unacceptable use of Social Media sites may include:
a) Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, negative comments, threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of the school community.

b) Forwarding or 'Liking' material that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party.

c) Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the school's image or reputation.

d) Creating a fake profile that impersonates any another member of the school community.

e) Sending or posting material that is confidential to the school.

f) Uses that violates copyright law, fail to observe licensing agreements or infringe on others intellectual property rights.

g) Participating in the viewing or exchange of inappropriate images or obscene material.

h) Plagiarism should be avoided and credit should always be given to the original author.

i) While all cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis, the school and its Board of Management considers the above to be serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour. Disciplinary action may be taken in the case of inappropriate use of social media tools.

5. Personal Devices:

a) It is a direct infringement on our AUP for any student to bring any devices other than their iPad to school.

b) If a student brings their own mobile phone or iPod to school devices, or if they send offensive/inappropriate text messages outside of school, or if they take pictures of any individual without their prior consent, appropriate sanctions will apply under the school's Code of Behaviour.

c) If a student brings their own mobile phone to school, it must be stored in their Phone Away Box at all times.

d) If a student sends offensive/inappropriate messages outside of school, or if they take pictures without their prior consent, appropriate sanctions will apply under the school's Code of Behaviour.

e) Smart Watches are not permitted in school except where prior permission has been given by school management.

6. Further Information

The school reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the relevant authorities.

Sanctions for Policy infringements

Infringements of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including, (but not exclusively):

a) Suspension of network and iPad privileges
b) Confiscation of devices if found on school grounds or on school related activities
c) Notification to parents
d) After-School Reflection Period
e) Suspension from school and/or school-related activities
f) Expulsion in the case of serious misconduct which brings the school into disrepute or defames, slanders or bullies any member of the school community. This especially applies, but not exclusively, to any student who sets up a facility or contributes or allows material to be sourced for the purpose of degrading, bullying or humiliating any member of the school community.
g) Legal action and/or prosecution.

The Board of Management adopted this Policy on October 3rd 2016.
This Policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on November 28th 2023.

It is available to all school partners and is published on the school's website.

The policy will be reviewed annually, and/or as is deemed necessary.