

St. Mary's N.S.
Bishopscourt
Ballygunner
Waterford
X91 HF65
(Office) 051-878388
School Roll No. 17351A
e-mail: office@ballygunner.ie
Web: <http://ballygunner.ie>
Twitter @BallygunnerNS

Digital Learning

Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

2025

Contents

1. General Approach
2. Content Filtering
3. Web Browsing and Downloading
4. Email & Digital Communication
5. Social Media
6. Personal Devices
7. Images & Video
8. Cyberbullying
9. School Website
10. Protocols for Remote Teaching
11. Legislation, Permission & Conclusion

General Approach

The aim of this Digital Learning Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from the 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. If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

The policy applies to the use of the Internet and technology resources while on school premises and the use of any school resources that can be accessed outside of school. This policy also provides guidelines to parents on the safe use of technology in the home.

This **Digital Learning Internet AUP** will be updated regularly, to keep up to date with new and emerging technologies and new Web 2.0 tools that may or may not be used in St. Mary's N.S. Updates to this document will be communicated through Aladdin Connect and the school's website [http:// ballygunner.ie](http://ballygunner.ie). This document can be viewed on the **Policies** page of the school's website.

This Digital Learning Internet AUP applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents and pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Mary's N.S.

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

- ❖ to always treat others with respect.
- ❖ 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.

This policy has been developed by The Digital Learning Coordinator in consultation with The Principal, The Digital Learning Team, The In-School Management Team, teachers, support staff, parents and representatives of The Board of Management.

The Digital Learning Internet AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

Content Filtering

The internet is an essential element of 21st Century life for education, business and social interaction. The school has a duty to provide quality internet access as part of their learning experience.

Internet access in St. Mary's N.S. has been designed expressly for pupil use and will include appropriate filtering. St. Mary's N.S. has chosen to implement **Level 4 of content filtering** on the **Schools Broadband Network**.

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.

The **safety of our pupils** is always our primary concern, so sites endorsed by St. Mary's N.S. for students' use have been carefully evaluated. St. Mary's N.S. will employ several strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and **promote safer use of the internet**:

- ❖ Internet usage will be **strictly supervised at all times**.
- ❖ **Pupils will never be required to submit personal information**.
- ❖ **Student accounts** will be created under strict protection and guidelines.
- ❖ Websites will be **previewed / evaluated** before being integrated into lessons.
- ❖ Pupils will be provided with education around internet safety as part of the implementation of the **SPHE** curriculum.
- ❖ Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in St. Mary's N.S. through our promotion of www.webwise.ie.
- ❖ Teachers will engage with continuing professional development opportunities around internet safety provided by The PDST and www.webwise.ie.
- ❖ Parents will engage with material provided by www.webwise.ie to promote safer internet use in the home.
- ❖ St. Mary's N.S. participates in **Safer Internet Day** activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

Web Browsing and Downloading

- ❖ Pupils will learn what acceptable use of the internet is and will be given clear objectives for internet use.
- ❖ Pupils will use the school's internet connection only for educational purposes. Pupils will be educated in the effective use of the Internet for research, including the skills of knowledge, location, retrieval and evaluation.
- ❖ Pupils will learn to evaluate Internet content and about the importance of cross-checking information before accepting its accuracy.
- ❖ Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials. School iPads will use a **classroom management app** to monitor pupil's use. Pupils not following instruction may have their iPad locked remotely and confiscated.
- ❖ Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher. Pupils will turn off the device while awaiting further instruction.
- ❖ The school will ensure that the use of Internet materials derived by staff and pupils complies with copyright law.
- ❖ Pupils 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.
- ❖ **Downloading** by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed. Pupils will **not download** or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- ❖ The use of torrent sites is not allowed.
- ❖ **Permission** must be sought to download any programme or app onto a school device.
- ❖ Anti-Virus software is in use on all school devices and updated regularly.
- ❖ **The use of personal memory sticks or other personal digital storage media in school is not allowed by teachers or pupils. Teachers will use Microsoft 365 to securely store data.**

Digital Communication

- ❖ The staff of St. Mary's use **Aladdin Connect** for Administration and Home/School Communication purposes.
- ❖ The staff of St. Mary's use **Seesaw** for Home/School Communication purposes.
- ❖ **Permissions** are no longer sent home in printed form. **Where possible, all permissions are granted via the Aladdin Connect App.**
- ❖ School Attendance is recorded on the Aladdin System. **Parents will provide an explanation for absences on Aladdin Connect only.**
- ❖ All data stored on the Aladdin System is **secured with 128 bit SSL encryption.**
- ❖ The staff of St. Mary's N.S. have been provided with a Microsoft 365 @ballygunner.ie email account. **This is a method of two-way digital communication approved.** The staff of St. Mary's are contactable by parents via their school e-mail during school hours only. The staff of St. Mary's N.S are required to keep a record of e-mail communications. **Pupils are not permitted to contact school staff by e-mail.**
- ❖ **The pupils and staff of St. Mary's N.S. are not permitted to use personal e-mail accounts.**
- ❖ Pupils will not use personal emails accounts for the setting up of accounts on cloud platforms or digital portfolio apps. **The pupils will use their parent/guardian email account thereby implying consent.**

Web 2.0 Social Media

The safety of our pupils on the web is of utmost importance. Web 2.0 is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately.

- ❖ The use of instant messaging services and apps including Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram & What's App etc. are **not permitted** in St. Mary's N.S. **on any school device**.
- ❖ The staff in St. Mary's N.S must not connect a personal smart device to the school WIFI for the purposes of social networking. The staff must **not use** school email addresses for the setting up of personal social media accounts.
- ❖ **The staff of St. Mary's N.S. will not use social media platforms such as Facebook or What's app to communicate with parents or pupils.**
- ❖ The school has an Instagram Account @st.marysnsballygunner managed by an Assistant Principal operated under strict privacy settings. The comment feature is not permitted on posts.
- ❖ The staff of St. Mary's use **Seesaw Accounts** as Digital Portfolios and to share class news with home.
- ❖ **Parents must be aware that the digital age of consent in Ireland is 16.** Many social media apps have age requirements of 13 minimum. We ask that this is adhered to. Parents are asked to consult www.webwise.ie for parental advice. Many social media sites have minimum age requirements. We would advise parents **not to allow their children to have personal accounts on social media.**
- ❖ **The use of video streaming sites such as YouTube are permitted with express permission and previewing by teaching staff under strict supervision.**
- ❖ Staff and pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, other members of the St. Mary's N.S. community.
- ❖ Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St. Mary's N.S. community on social media. Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Mary's N.S. into disrepute. Staff and pupils must not represent their personal views as those of being St. Mary's N.S. on any social medium.

Personal Devices

- ❖ **Pupils are not permitted to use privately owned internet-enabled devices in school.**
- ❖ **Mobile phones are not allowed in school and to be in possession of one is in direct breach of the school's digital internet acceptable use policy.**
- ❖ **ALL pupil's personal devices that have the capability of taking photographs or recording video or audio, such as iPads, iPods, tablets, MP3 players, DS or PSP consoles, smart watches and any other items not listed here but with these capabilities, are always forbidden within the school grounds.** Neither the class teacher nor the school will be held liable for any personal devices lost, stolen or damaged on school property.
- ❖ Pupils using technology provided by The Department of Education for pupils with Special Educational Needs in school should follow the rules set out in this agreement, in the same way as if they were using school equipment. St. Mary's N.S. does not accept responsibility for the maintenance or servicing of technology provided by The Department of Education for pupils with Special Educational Needs. This is a parental responsibility.

Images & Video

- ❖ In St. Mary's N.S., pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission on any school device.
- ❖ Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with **expressed permission** from staff.
- ❖ Photographs/Videos may be taken of pupils participating in school activities, on school trips, in school plays/concerts, during visits from the mayor or other dignitary, for reward displays in classrooms, for religious displays (Communion and Confirmation) and/or any school or educational activity not currently listed here.
- ❖ **Please note that NO photographs may be taken during the religious ceremonies (Sacrament of Penance, Communion, Confirmation, etc.)**
- ❖ Photographs and/or videos may be posted on the school's website, located at <http://ballygunner.ie> or on the school's social media accounts.
- ❖ Pupil photographs will not carry any individual names as part of the caption.
- ❖ Pupils must not share images, videos or other content online with the intention of harming another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.
- ❖ Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of pupils and/or minors is unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other pupils automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Cyberbullying

St. Mary's N.S. will investigate with the cooperation of parents/guardians' incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff as per **School Codes of Behaviour** and **Anti-Bullying Policy**.

Cyberbullying refers to bullying which is carried out using the internet, mobile phone or other technological devices. Cyberbullying generally takes a psychological rather than physical form but is often part of a wider pattern of 'traditional' bullying. It can take the form of sending nasty, mean or threatening messages, emails, photos or video clips, silent phone calls, putting up nasty posts or pictures on a message board, website or chat room, saying hurtful things in a chat room, pretending to be someone else in a chat room or message board or text message and saying hurtful things, or accessing someone's accounts to make trouble for them.

- ❖ Any form of harassment using electronic devices, commonly known as cyberbullying, is prohibited and will not be tolerated.
- ❖ Students are encouraged to report an incident or any communication that constitutes cyberbullying to the school or any member of staff.
- ❖ Engaging in online activities with the intention of harming, harassing, or embarrass another pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.
- ❖ **Parents/Guardians and students should be aware that placing a once-off, offensive or hurtful internet 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.**
- ❖ The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the Wellbeing programme in our school.

School Website

The school's website address is <http://ballygunner.ie> .

- ❖ St. Mary's N.S. will review the content of the school website regularly to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.
- ❖ Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages. **Pupils will continue to own copyright on any work published.**
- ❖ St. Mary' N.S. will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities.
- ❖ Pupil photographs will not carry any names as part of the caption; however, pieces of artwork / class work may carry a pupil's first name.
- ❖ The use of digital photographs/ or video will be embedded within our school website and not available for download.
- ❖ Pupils 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.
- ❖ The publication of student work will be coordinated by the staff of St. Mary's N.S.

Protocols for Continuity of Teaching during an unexpected school closure

St. Mary's N.S recognises that online collaboration is essential to distance learning and may provide access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among staff, students and parents.

If students need to use the internet for homework **or for distance learning during an unexpected school closure**, it is the **responsibility of the parent(s) to supervise their work at home.**

- ❖ In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, class teachers will use the features of the **Aladdin Connect** as a means of daily communication to ensure the continuity of teaching.
- ❖ Class teachers and Special Education teachers can communicate with parents using the @ballygunner.ie email where more individualised communication is necessary, during school hours.
- ❖ Special Education teachers use the digital portfolio app **Seesaw** for the continuity of teaching. The teachers of St Mary's N.S. will use the digital portfolio app SeeSaw with **strict privacy settings** in place. Seesaw is GDPR compliant.
- ❖ In the rare occasion when a phonecall is necessary, teachers will keep their number private.
- ❖ The staff of St. Mary's N.S. are members of a Microsoft 365 School Teaching Team to facilitate professional collaboration and communication. Protocols for the use of staff video conferencing will be implemented.
- ❖ **The use of live Video Conferencing eg MS Teams/ Zoom is not permitted between school staff and pupils. St. Mary's N.S. can not be responsible for safe internet use in a live setting.**
- ❖ The use of **pre-recorded Digital Video** can be created using online platforms eg Adobe Spark by The staff of St. Mary's N.S. to provide for continuity of teaching during an unexpected school closure. Digital video can be shared securely with pupils within Aladdin Connect or Seesaw.

- ❖ Classes in St. Mary's N.S. may have pages on the **Padlet** platform. Teachers may create "walls" to showcase pupils work providing for class collaboration. No copyright material will be uploaded onto any of Padlet pages. Additions to any of our class/ school's Padlet pages will be moderated and require authorisation before appearing on our Padlet pages.
- ❖ The teachers at St. Mary's may use the educational quiz creator website **Kahoot** as a method of assessment. Pupils **do not need an account** to participate in the quizzes, and all quizzes created will be used solely for school related work.

Legislation

The school has sought the advice of The PDST and Webwise template for the creation of this AUP

St. Mary's N.S. is guided by the following legislation relating to use of the Internet by teachers, students and parents

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

Permission

As the parent or legal guardian of a pupil in St. Mary's N.S., I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet.

Conclusion

This policy on Digital Learning Internet Acceptable Use (AUP) will be amended from time to time as required. Any member of staff who uses digital resources is deemed to have made him/herself aware of these policies.