

Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)

This policy has been formulated by St Abbans NS to assist teachers, pupils and parents in making an informed decision in relation to the safe and practical use of technology in education.

Rationale

As the rationale for having an AUP is primarily to promote good practice and safe, responsible use of the internet and digital technologies, it is a very important document. Its main goals are: To educate students, parents and teachers about the potential of the internet and digital technologies as a valuable learning resource to identify the school strategy on promoting the safe use of the Internet and address the risks associated with its use to provide schools with legal protection from liability

Aim

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from 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. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the Code of Behaviour– will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. Before enrolling, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the AUP unless the school is specifically notified.

This AUP was updated in January 2026.

School's Strategy

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:

General

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage by physical and active supervision, positioning screens that are easily visible to the teacher, spot checks and reporting of incidents.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's permission.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- It is important that parents/guardians and pupils are aware of our Bí Cineálta Policy & Anti Cyber Bullying Policy in relation to social media;
 - *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 should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.*
 - *However, in the context of this policy, placing 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

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 use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- 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 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.

World Wide Web

- Students will not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will use the internet for educational purposes only during class time. Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is in direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- Students 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.

Email / Google Drive / Internet Chat

- Children must sign a written agreement annually, with parents and class teacher, prior to accessing school email accounts.
- School email address and drive is to be used for educational purposes only.
- The email address provided by the school for use with school technology is the property of St Abbans NS. If a child receives any inappropriate emails, he/she should inform class teacher and a parent/guardian.
- Students will use approved class email accounts in school under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers, pictures or passwords.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will not have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication forums.
- 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 should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.

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

Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

- 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 students, staff and other members of the school community on social media.
- Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff and students must not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social media service or message services.
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

Staff can be directed to Guidance for Registered Teachers about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication.

Guidance for Teachers

Schools may also direct staff to Guidance for Registered Teachers about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registeredteachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

Distance Learning

Children may need to complete school work from home in the event of any school closures. During this time, they will need to access their e-learning platform at home. Usage of a school account at home is still subject to school policy. Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform. The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR). Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.

For staff and teachers:

- Teachers have overall control of the online interaction of their class on the e-learning platform.
- Teachers will moderate and encourage respectful discussion and interaction, teachers may elect to use the mute function of their e-learning platform for a period of time already agreed upon with the class. The mute function will allow the student(s) to communicate with their teachers but not post publicly until they are 'unmuted'.

For students:

- Children access their e-learning platform using their login account. They can contact their class teacher in the event they cannot remember their password
- All conversations will be via their login account addresses. If a child receives a message from an external email address, they should let their class teacher know.
- Teacher expectations of behaviour online will continue to follow the school's code of behaviour
- Recording or forwarding any eLearning content is not permitted – such as worksheets, answers, solutions, videos, notes or Zoom / Google Meet links.
- Students online activity can be viewed by their teachers and principal at any-time. This includes conversations via email, Google Classroom, Zoom and Google Meet and their general levels of online activity on these platforms.
- Work submitted by the child to any e-learning platform may be published on school social media to show examples of great work (where appropriate).

For parents:

- Please encourage and support your child is checking into their e-learning platform when possible for assigned work.
- Where live classes are being run please ensure your child is in an area of the house that is quiet and free from distractions. Please be mindful of Child Protection Guidelines, for example, bedrooms should not be used for live classes.
- Live online classes should be viewed by your child only.

Live Online Classes

Teachers may deliver some of the curriculum “live” online. This will use varying combinations of audio, video, virtual white-boards and screencasts.

In the event of a live online class all students are required to:

- Follow the direction of their teacher, just as in the classroom.
- Turn on their video at the start of the call so their teacher can verify their identity. They may turn off their camera afterwards if they wish.
- Mute their microphone unless the teacher invites them to speak. In any case, all microphones should be on mute when a person is not speaking to avoid distracting background noise being broadcast to everyone.

An e-learning link is intended for the student only. The teacher will decide who should receive the link. Do not forward any link to anyone else.

The Web

The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance so the following rules apply to the school and parents. The Web is open to potential dangers when used inappropriately. We would ask:

- Many social media sites have minimum age requirements. While the school will not monitor this, we would advise parents to not allow their children to have personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, etc. until they are the appropriate age. Many social media sites will be used by teachers in class, for example, Twitter. However, all interactions will be under the supervision of the teacher.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child’s online activity / digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps (e.g. Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, Viber, Whatsapp, Instagram etc.) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child’s online interaction with others and approve of same.
- Please do not “tag” photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.
- If you are uploading a photograph, please ensure that it does not identify the child in any way. Please make sure photograph size is kept as small as possible (no bigger than 800x600 pixels)
- Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages written on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- Avoid any negative conversations about children, staff or parents on social media accounts.
- Please do not request to “friend” a member of staff in the school. The staff would like to keep their personal lives personal. It may be awkward for a staff member to be asked to ignore a Facebook or other social network request.
- Please do not add advertisements to our wall without prior permission of the principal.
- Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban to our social media accounts.

The following list should help identify “inappropriate activities” in your school. Users should not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on, material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:

Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer 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
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material Any other activity considered questionable

School Website

- Please note that the following points apply to the school's web site and social media profiles, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google Classroom etc.
- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the World Wide Web in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Pupils' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages.
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities. Photographs, audio and video clips will be used. Video clips will not be password protected.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school website will avoid publishing the names of individuals in a photograph.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – will not use pupils' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Pupil Personal Devices

Pupil Personal Devices are not permitted for use during the school day and school activities. This includes smart phones, smart watches and tablets. Usage of mobile phones/electronic devices must be in adherence to the Mobile Phone / Electronic Devices Policy.

- Pupils sending nuisance text messages is a direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- The unauthorized taking of images with a mobile phone camera or electronic device, still or moving is in direct breach of the school's acceptable usage policy.
- Please see mobile phone & electronic device policy and Code of Behaviour for further information.

Cyberbullying

Definition of bullying [Chapter 2 - Bí Cineálta procedures]

- Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social, and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be:

- Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (e.g.: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Online bullying behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms, and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private, or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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 (Amendment) Act 2003
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988
- Bí Cinéalta Guidelines for Primary Schools (2023)

Support Structures

St Abbans NS endeavours to have support structures in place to ensure the appropriate use of electronic devices in school and to ensure staff, parents and pupils feel supported in same.

- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks bi-annually for pupils from 2nd – 6th class.
- The school will provide Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying talks for parents and guardians biannually to all parents in the school.
- Community Gardaí link in with classes re Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying annually.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to AUP, internet safety and Cyber Bullying.
- 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 may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour. Sanctions can include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

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

Review

This policy was reviewed in February 2026 and updated in line with department guidelines.

AI: Educational Integration and Support

The following statements are intended as a guide for schools to collaboratively review, discuss, and agree upon their approach to integrating AI into learning, teaching, and assessment.

- The school recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.
- The school encourages 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 aligns with educational goals, including supporting teaching and learning.

AI: Ethical Use and Data Protection

The following statements are intended as a guide for schools to collaboratively review, discuss, and agree upon their approach to integrating AI into learning, teaching, and assessment.

- School staff are encouraged to 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 school comply with data protection regulations.
- Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.
- Staff must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame learners, their family members, staff, other members of the school community.
- Staff and learners (if generated outside of school) must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring the school into disrepute.

Signed: **Mary Byrne** (Chairperson)

Date: 12th February 2026

Signed: **Lynda Treacy** (Principal)

Date: 12th February 2026

Permission Form Template

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

Student

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.

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Responsible Internet Use Pupil Undertaking

We use the School computers and Internet connection for learning.

These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site
- I will not bring external storage devices such as pen drives (or memory sticks/USB keys etc.) into school without permission
- I will not use email for personal reasons
- I will only use email for school projects and with my teacher's permission
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible
- When sending e-mail, I will not give my home address or phone number or arrange to meet anyone
- I will ask for permission before opening an e-mail or an e-mail attachment
- I will not use internet chat rooms
- If I see anything I am unhappy with or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the sites I visit
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed.

Signed: _____ Pupil(s)

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian,

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 school work 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.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Telephone: _____

Letter to Parents/Guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Safe and Responsible Use of the Internet

As part of the school's education programme we offer students 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.

However, access to and use of the Internet and digital technologies requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy (enclosed). It is important that this enclosed document is read carefully, signed by a parent or guardian 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.

Having read the terms of our school's Acceptable Use Policy, you may like to take a moment to consider how the Internet is used in your own home, and see if there is any way you could make it safer for your own family.

Parents/Guardians can find a range of advice, support, tools and resources on the Webwise Parents Hub available on webwise.ie/parents. On the hub you'll find explainer guides to popular apps, talking points, how to guides, expert advice videos and a free Parents' Guide to a Better Internet.

Yours sincerely,

Lynda Treacy.