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## RETNS POLICY ON ICT Acceptable Use

### *Policy No. 1/20*

#### **Introduction:**

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School (RETNS) recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our students enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills. To that end, we provide access to ICT for student use. The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's ICT resources in a safe and effective manner.

The Board of Management of RETNS reserves the right to amend this policy to adapt to changing circumstances entirely at its discretion.

#### **Purpose:**

This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our students are expected to follow when using current and future school technologies. Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline. These rules are found in the RETNS Code of Behaviour.

This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the RETNS Anti-Bullying Policy and RETNS Behaviour Policy.

#### **Scope:**

This policy has been drawn up to protect our students from the risks associated with the Internet while they are at school. Parents and Guardians are advised however that while the children may be given internet based homework assignments from time to time, **the school takes no responsibility for the internet usage of the students while they are outside school. It is important that all parents and guardians monitor their own child's internet usage at home and ensure that their children are aware and respectful of the risks involved.**

**Policy statement:**

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet while they are school. These strategies are as follows:

**1. General**

Children will be taught about safe internet usage during each academic year before accessing the internet in school. Internet safety posters will be displayed by teachers.

Students, parents and staff are advised to visit websites such as [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for information on the safe usage of the internet.

Staff will receive regular CPD on Internet Safety

The school's filtering system will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material in school.

ICT sessions will always be supervised by a teacher and children's use of the Internet will be monitored.

Teachers using interactive whiteboards and projectors will be particularly vigilant and will preview the material being presented in order to ensure that it is age appropriate and adheres to the conditions of this AUP.

Students should not upload or download software, music or videos without prior permission from a staff member.

The use of any form of removal storage (such as memory sticks, CD-ROMs etc.) must be with the permission of a staff member.

Students will observe good 'netiquette' (i.e. etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute. Good netiquette will be demonstrated to the children through activities on sites such as [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

**2. School Use of the World Wide Web**

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

Students will use the internet for educational purposes only.

Students will be taught about copyright issues relating to online learning. Students who copy information or images from the Web into their assignments will acknowledge the source.

Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.

Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored

### **3. Email**

Pupils will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.

Students will not use their own personal e-mail addresses to send e-mails from school.

Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene or defamatory, or material 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.

Photographs of individual children will never be sent by e-mail. Photographs of students involved in group activities will only be sent with the permission of the teacher

Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.

If students have any concerns about the content of any e-mail they receive at school, they will inform a member of staff immediately.

### **4. Internet chat and forums**

Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.

Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.

Username/nicknames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.

Face-to-face meetings with persons organised on the internet are forbidden, unless it is as part of a school project and with the teacher's permission.

### **5. School Website**

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork and other school work on the School Website. The publication of students' work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.

Photographs and audio clips of children may be used on the website. These will be published with permission using the school's standard permission form which is signed on accepting a place in the school. These will focus on group activities and the use of individual photographs will be avoided.

Personal information including home addresses and contact details will not appear on the school web site.

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

Students who copy content from the Web onto the school website or blog must ensure they are permitted to use this content and should acknowledge the source.

## **6. Online Collaboration through Blogging and Other Platforms**

RETNS recognises that online collaboration supports education and we may provide students with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among students.

Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful and courteous conduct online as offline. This is of particular relevance to our school blog. Details of respectful behaviours which reflect our school values are outlined in some detail in the Guidelines for Posting on the Kids' Blog. When blogging, recording audio or sending any sort of online communication from a school device, students must not slander, defame or misrepresent the school or the views or activities of another individual.

## **7. Mobile Devices**

RETNS may provide students with tablets, digital cameras, digital recorders or other devices to promote learning both inside and outside of the school. Students should abide by the same acceptable use policy, when using school devices off the school network, as on the school network.

Students are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to their teacher immediately.

Each student / pair of students will use the same tablet number throughout the school year to facilitate monitoring of tablets.

Students will not have access to tablet passwords except in 6<sup>th</sup> class where students will only have access to specific tablets.

Use of school issued tablets will be monitored.

Teachers will decide what apps are appropriate for their class.

Students must not move away from the app their teacher has opened for them to work on unless they have been instructed by their teacher.

Students may not access the Play Store or download apps to the tablets.

Students may not delete or move apps or folders.

## **8. Personal Mobile Devices**

Students may not use personally-owned digital devices in school without the explicit permission of the teacher.

Appropriate online behaviour and adherence to the acceptable use policy should always be used.

The school will take no responsibility for loss or damage to personally owned digital devices.

## **8.1 Use of Mobile Phones**

In exceptional circumstances, parents may apply in writing for permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school. A form is provided for this purpose at the school office.

No child may bring a mobile phone to school unless the Principal has given permission in writing.

Students' phones must be switched off during the school day and not used on the school premises.

Students are not permitted to use phones as cameras under any circumstances in school, on school trips or during extra-curricular activities.

## **9. Security**

We ask that our students use common sense if they think a website does not look 'right'. They must not click on anything they feel is not right.

Students are expected to alert their teacher immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

If they believe a computer or mobile device they are using might be infected with a virus, they must alert their teacher.

## **10. Personal Safety**

If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, they should bring it to the immediate attention of

a teacher if they are at school

a parent / guardian if they are at home

Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers and birth-dates over the Internet.

Students should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life.

Students' images will not be shared online on retns.ie without explicit expressed permission from their parents. Parents will sign their consent, and also the AUP, during the enrolment process.

Students must not take, use or share images of or from other students on school online platforms.

## **11. Netiquette**

Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behaviour over computer networks and in particular in the online environment. To this end:

Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.

Students should not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents or teachers to see.

## **12. Plagiarism**

Students should not plagiarise content (copy or use as your own without citing the original creator), including words or images from the Internet, for inclusion on our school blog.

Students should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online.

## **13. Cyber-Bullying**

Our students must not send messages or post comments or photos with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Harassing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will not be tolerated in RETNS.

In some cases, cyber-bullying is a crime.

RETNS is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular [0081/2017](#)) and will act as required.

The school will support students, teachers and parents in dealing with cyberbullying.

## **14. Distance Learning**

In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers and SNAs, acting under the direction of teachers, may use a range of online platforms including Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Seesaw, Padlet, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Class Dojo and other platforms approved by the principal to assist with distance teaching and learning.

The school has signed up to the terms of service of the online platforms in use by the school. The school has enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these online platforms provide.

Staff members will adhere to school guidelines on the use of platforms for live engagement.

If teachers or SNAs are using Zoom, parent's email addresses will be used for children to access lessons or meetings.

Parents will be asked to sign a consent form for their children to engage with teachers and SNAs using online platforms.

Parents/guardians must agree to monitor their child's participation in any such lessons and to be in the room with the child for any one-to-one meetings or classes.

Children will be expected to follow school guidelines on online behaviour.

## **15. Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy**

Violations of this policy in RETNS may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

Suspension of ICT privileges.

Notification to parents/guardians in most cases.

Sanctions in accordance with the RETNS Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

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

We make a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of school technologies.

## **16. Support Structures**

The school will regularly update students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

### **Roles/responsibilities:**

The Board of Management is responsible for the formulation of this policy.

The Principal and teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of this policy during the school day.

Parents and guardians are responsible for the internet usage of the students while they are outside school. It is important that all parents and guardians monitor their own child's internet usage at home and ensure that their children are aware and respectful of the risks involved.

### **Related documentation:**

RETNS Anti-Bullying Policy

RETNS Behaviour Policy

[www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0081/2017)

Appendix 1 - Acceptable Usage Policy Permission Slip

Appendix 2 – Pupil Code for Online Interactions

### **Contact details:**

Contact details: Queries about this policy should be addressed to the Principal in the first instance:

The Principal

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School

Loreto Avenue

Rathfarnham

Dublin 14

Telephone: (01) 493 8677

E-mail: [info@retns.ie](mailto:info@retns.ie)

### **Review date:**

Review date: This policy was reviewed by the BOM in February 2020.

This policy and its associated procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis but will be undergo full review in 2022, or earlier if necessary.

## **Appendix 1 - Acceptable Usage Policy Permission Slip**

Acceptable Usage Policy Permission Slip. Please read the policy carefully to ensure that the conditions of use of ICT are accepted and understood and then sign and return to the school.

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I/We grant permission for our child to be allowed access to the internet in school. We are satisfied that our child is aware of the dangers and the benefits associated with the internet and we are aware that there is an Acceptable Use Policy in place in the school. With our child, we have read the rules for responsible internet use in our child's school diary.

Pupil's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix 2 - Pupil Code for Online Interactions**

### **Pupil Code for Online Interactions**

#### **1. Behaviour**

Be respectful of other people's views and their work

Do not engage with online trolls or cyberbullies and report online trolls and cyberbullies to an adult. If the website you are using has a 'Report' function, use it.

#### **2. Language**

Always use positive language online and be careful using capital letters, exclamation marks and emojis as these can change the meaning of what you're writing.

Remember that comments will stay on the internet forever.

#### **3. Copying**

Don't take credit for other people's work and make sure to say where you got your information from. Use search engines such as 'Kiddle' to find age appropriate and copyright free images.

#### **4. Judgement**

Don't believe everything you read on the internet. Use your judgement and try to become aware of fake or untrue content.

Try to find more than one source for your research.

#### **5. Privacy & Safety**

Never give out personal information of your own or the information of other people. This includes your full name, address, school, phone number etc. Be sensible and safe. If you ever come across something that upsets you, tell an adult.