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## **RETNS POLICY ON ICT Acceptable Use**

### **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 at 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
- Children and teachers are supported in the area of Internet safety by the use of programmes such as WebWise, Be Internet Legends, Interland etc.
- Staff will receive regular CPD on Internet Safety. Internet Safety education is highlighted annually on Internet Safety Day
- Filtering software from the Schools Broadband Service is used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
- 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.
- Children 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 although GSuite for Education will, over time, effectively negate the need to use hard media storage
- Children 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)

**G Suite for Education/Google Classroom**

- When children join the school, they are allocated a G Suite account, to access core services
- When parental consent is given, children may also access the additional services as allocated to student accounts by the administrator
- Children may access the range of resources made available to them via their G Suite account on devices in school, or from home
- Children will not store anything unrelated to their school work on the cloud storage associated with their school account
- Children will not share obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials via the school's ICT infrastructure
- Staff monitor use of G Suite & Google Classroom by children
- Where a child is deemed to have breached school policies, their account will be suspended at the earliest opportunity
- When children leave the school, that account will be disabled within 3 months, giving children an opportunity to save any content they may wish to retain

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

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

Children will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials as soon as is practicable in order to inform the school's broadband service of filtering needs

Children will use the internet for educational purposes only

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

Children will never disclose or publicise personal information.

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

## **3. Email**

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

Children will not use their own personal email addresses to send emails from school.

Children will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene or defamatory, or material that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Children 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 email. Photographs of children involved in group activities will only be sent with the permission of the teacher

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

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

If children have any concerns about the content of any email they receive at school, they will inform a member of staff immediately.

Children will not access chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging, or other electronic communication fora. Google chat options will be disabled by the school administrator

## **4. School Website**

Children will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork and other school work on the School Website. The publication of children's work will be coordinated 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 and updated annually. They 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 website.

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

Children 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.

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

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

Children 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, children must not slander, defame or misrepresent the school or the views or activities of another individual.

## **6. Digital Learning Devices**

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

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

Where possible each child / pair of children will use the same Chromebook/tablet number throughout the school year to facilitate monitoring of tablets.

Children 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 Chromebooks and tablets will be monitored.

Teachers will decide what apps are appropriate for their class.

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

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

Children may not delete or move apps or folders.

## **7. Electronic Devices**

Children may not use personally-owned electronic communication devices in school. An electronic communication device is any device that has the capability to make or receive calls and/or send and receive messages and/or notifications, capture photos and record information. A smart watch is an electronic device.

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

### **7.1 Use of Electronic Communication Devices/ Mobile Phones/Smart Devices including Smart Watches**

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

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

Children's mobile phones/smart watches must be switched off during the school day and not used on the school premises. These devices must be stored safely and securely in children's school bags for the duration of the school day. Where such devices cannot be switched off (not on silent/school mode) they will not be allowed in school.

Children are not permitted to use mobile phones/smart watches as cameras/recording devices under any circumstances in school, on school trips or during extra-curricular activities.

## **8. Security**

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

Children 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.

## **9. Netiquette**

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

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

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

## **10. Cyber-Bullying**

Children 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 children, teachers and parents/guardians in dealing with cyberbullying.

## **11. Distance Learning**

In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers and ANAs, 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 ANAs are using Zoom, parents' / guardians' email addresses will be used for children to access lessons or meetings.

Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a consent form for their children to engage with teachers and ANAs 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.

## **12. 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
- Sanctions in accordance with the RETNS Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

The school will 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.

## **13. Support Structures**

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

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

## **15. 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

**16. Contact details:**

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

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)

**17. Review date:**

This policy was reviewed by the BOM in February 2023 and again in November 2023.

This policy and its associated procedures will be monitored on an ongoing basis but will be undergo full review in 2025, or earlier if necessary.





## **Appendix 1 - 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 the slip below and return it to the school.

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.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## **Appendix 2 – Behaviour 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 your 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 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.