



## Acceptable Use Policy

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### General Approach

The aim of this 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 If the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

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

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- 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 Acceptable Use Policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in St Vincent de Paul Girls' School.

It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St Vincent de Paul Girls' School.

This policy is understood in line with other relevant policies such as Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Use of Electronic Devices Policy, Remote Teaching and Learning Policy.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action as per the Code of Behaviour, 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 (e.g An Garda Síochána, TUSLA, etc.).

St Vincent de Paul Girls' School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school but which impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff under this policy and associated Codes of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. In such cases St Vincent de Paul Girls' School will, where known, inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

In certain circumstances, the Board of Management may seek legal advice and may pursue legal action if deemed appropriate to do so.

Webwise.ie (<https://www.webwise.ie/parents/>) is an excellent online resource for teachers, pupils and parents and we suggest that parents refer to this regularly for information and



advice. There is also a digital download available called Parent's Guide to a Better Internet that we suggest parents should download and refer to.

### **Our School's Strategy**

The Internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It can develop children's independent research skills and promote lifelong learning. St Vincent de Paul Girls' School implements the following strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet and promote safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Pupils will be provided with two internet safety sessions per year, one in September and one in spring. The sessions will include resources from Stay Safe and Webwise, and a Digital Citizenship presentation. The teachers will discuss the AUP policy, including the internet safety pledge with the students during these sessions. Attendance will be taken by the teacher to ensure that every student attends at least one of these sessions per year.
- Webwise will be used in September and Spring, along with appropriate sections of Stay Safe (Internet Safety) 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> (to revise 2<sup>nd</sup>), 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> (to revise 4<sup>th</sup>) and 6<sup>th</sup> class
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- A firewall is being used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material and to block unsuitable sites. This is updated regularly.
- Virus protection software is used and updated regularly.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents
- Twice yearly lessons on Internet safety and attendance records kept by teachers
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff at specific times, e.g. guest speaker.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal should be informed.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed regularly by the following stakeholders: Board of Management, teaching staff, support staff, pupils and parents.

Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. In signing this policy, **it is for the duration of the child's time as a pupil in the school unless the policy is changed or amended in which case parents will be notified and pupils will sign up to the amended policy.**



### **Pupil Access to the Internet**

The internet is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. St. Vincent de Paul Girls School aims to provide pupils with quality Internet access as part of their learning experience and it is seen that this internet use will enhance learning.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation for living and working in this information age. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum, and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources, as outlined in this policy. Pupils' use of telecommunications and electronic information will be taught and provided for from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class.

St Vincent de Paul Girls' School has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network (PDST Technology in Education):

- This allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube (teacher access only) but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking category.

Pupils taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

The school will take all reasonable precautions to prevent access to inappropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of Internet content, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a computer connected to the school network. The school cannot accept liability for any material accessed, or any consequences of Internet access.

1. Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher permission
2. Internet will be used for educational purposes only
3. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher
4. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
5. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites
6. Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues
7. Uploading and downloading of non-approved material is banned
8. Pupils will observe good 'netiquette' (etiquette on the internet) at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring a school into disrepute



9. 'YouTube' (and similar sites) used only by teachers will be reviewed by the teacher in advance of the lesson.
10. Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
11. Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher, by minimising the screen and advising the teacher/supervisor.
12. 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.
13. Pupils will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.
14. Pupils will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
15. Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.

### **Email and Messaging**

- Messaging through Google Classroom profile will be used for educational purposes only
- Pupils will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher
- Pupils should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other pupils.
- Pupils will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
- Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details e.g. addresses, telephone numbers, or pictures via school email
- Pupils will never arrange to meet someone via school email
- Sending or receiving email attachments is subject to teacher permission
- Pupils should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
- Pupils should be aware that email communications are monitored.

Pupils should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication.



### **Social Media**

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in St Vincent de Paul Girls' School:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, Whats Apps, G Chat etc. is forbidden in St Vincent de Paul Girls' School.

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 Vincent de Paul Girls' School community

Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St Vincent de Paul Girls' School community on social media.

Staff and pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St Vincent de Paul Girls' School into disrepute.

Staff and pupils must not represent personal views as those being of St Vincent de Paul Girls' School on any social medium.

### **Personal Devices**

Pupils using their own technology (e.g. mobile phone or other electronic device, as defined in Use of Electronic Devices Policy) is in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy, Code of Behaviour and Use of Electronic Devices Policy. Sanctions will apply, as per Code of Behaviour.

*If a pupil is found taking or having taken photographs or video footage with a mobile phone/device of either themselves, other pupils or school personnel this will be regarded as a serious/gross unacceptable behaviour and action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. If a pupil shares/comments/likes/willingly participates in inappropriate recordings/photos/messages which can be shared on any social media platform and which are in breach of our school's policies this will be regarded as a serious/gross unacceptable behaviour and action will be taken according to the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. The school will facilitate the investigation of alleged incidents of breach of this policy where such incidents are brought to the attention of school personnel (either by pupils themselves, their families, or members of the wider school community). In such instances, the school's investigation will be based on the evidence made available to us (for example screenshots).*



## iPads

### **All rules pertaining to Internet use (see above) also apply to use of Ipads while in use during school hours**

- Students should never leave their iPad unattended when in use.
- Students should follow the teacher's instructions accessing only the applications to which the teacher has agreed.
- Students require permission before sending any form of electronic message.
- Audio or vision taken at school cannot be transmitted, broadcast or transferred without the teacher's permission.
- The camera and audio recording functions may only be used under the teacher's direction.
- Identity theft (Pretending to be someone else) is in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy.
- In the event of a child accidentally accessing inappropriate material or images during a lesson, the student will immediately minimize the page and report the incident to the class teacher without attracting the attention of other students.
- iPads must be handled with care at all times.
- Any damage to the device must be reported immediately to the teacher.

## **Images & Video**

Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

At St Vincent de Paul Girls' School pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission. All publishing is undertaken by staff members only and through official school channels only.

Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff and can only be done using school devices.

Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website (as per the school's Admissions Policy).

Pupils must not share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside (as per relevant policies).

## **Cyberbullying**

When using the internet pupils, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times. Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass



another pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

In order to resolve any concerns they may have relating to their child's education, we encourage parents to make contact with the class teacher promptly, rather than engaging in group discussions on social media sites. This will bring about an effective resolution where the child's welfare and progress are the focus of the discussion.

Measures are taken by St Vincent de Paul Girls' School to ensure that staff and pupils are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyber-bullying even when it happens outside the school or at night.

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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

As per section 2.1.3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 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.

The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school and will be dealt with in accordance to the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Use of Electronic Devices Policy and Remote Teaching and Learning Policy.

### **School Website**

The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher/group of teachers.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on St Vincent de Paul Girls' School web pages.

The St Vincent de Paul Girls' School will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

### **Sanctions**

- The school will take all reasonable precautions to prevent access to inappropriate material. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of Internet content, it is not possible to guarantee that unsuitable material will never appear on a computer connected to the school. Therefore, the guidelines in this policy must be adhered to at all times. Access to the Internet will be withdrawn from pupils who fail



to maintain acceptable standards of use. Internet access in school includes a strict filtering service yet no filtering service is completely fool proof.

- Procedures are in place should a child accidentally access inappropriate material and also should a child deliberately abuse the use of the Internet in school.
- Intentional misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- All of these sanctions are in line with our school's Code of Behaviour.

### **AUP and Remote Teaching and Learning Policy**

#### **Rationale:**

St Vincent de Paul Girls' School 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.

It is expected that everyone, students, staff and parents are expected to uphold the same appropriate, safe and courteous conduct online as is expected offline.

In order to resolve any concerns they may have relating to their child's education, we encourage parents to make contact with the class teacher promptly, rather than engaging in group discussions on social media sites. This will bring about an effective resolution where the child's welfare and progress are the focus of the discussion.

While engaging in remote or distance learning children, parents and staff will follow the protocols as set out in St Vincent De Paul Girls' School Remote Teaching and Learning Policy. **Please ensure to read this policy and by signing below you give your consent to the guidelines and protocols as set out in the school's Remote Teaching and Learning Policy.**





**THIS POLICY WAS REVIEWED AND RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

The AUP Policy for St Vincent de Paul Girls' School was reviewed by the Board of Management and ratified in June 2023.

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_



**Parent/Guardian & Child Consent Form**

**Parent/Guardian - Acceptable Use Policy Consent (to be returned to class teacher)**

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Please review the school's Acceptable Use Policy then sign and return this consent form to the class teacher.

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and Remote Teaching and Learning Policy and grant permission for my daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. 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.

I am happy for examples of my child's work and photographs/video of my child engaged in group activities to appear on the school website/twitter account if deemed appropriate by the school.

I also give consent for my daughter or the child in my care to engage in Remote Learning (as per Remote Teaching and Learning Policy), through the appropriate online Media used in SVdP Girls' School as outlined in the school's Remote Learning and Teaching Policy and give consent to my daughter/child in my care to be set up on the communication forum(s) used at St Vincent de Paul Girls' School. As part of the Remote Learning Policy, I will check my daughter's or the child in my care's work before it is submitted.

I have gone through both the Acceptable Use Policy and the Remote Teaching and Learning Policy with my daughter/child in my care

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance of AUP policy by your daughter/child in your care (Pupil Pledge signed in school and kept in school - see Appendix A)

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the Internet. I will use the Internet in a responsible way and obey all the rules explained to me by the school. I agree to the rules and guidelines in the Remote Teaching and Learning Policy and other relevant school policies referred to in this policy.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### **Appendix A - Acceptable Use Policy Pupil Pledge**

Covered with class teacher in class and signed **in class** by your daughter/child in your care

- I will only go on websites that have been approved by my teacher. I will not visit an inappropriate site on purpose.
- If I accidentally access an inappropriate site or image, I will minimise the page and tell the teacher immediately, without attracting the attention of those around me.
- I will use the Internet and digital media for educational purposes only.
- I will always use a safe search engine such as image bank on [www.scoilnet.ie](http://www.scoilnet.ie) to look up images.
- I will refrain from directly copying information from the Internet into my own work. I will always use my own words.
- I will never download images or words that have nothing to do with my school work.
- I am fully aware that everything I do on a school computer/laptop/tablet is monitored by the school.
- I will never access my personal email account in school.
- I will never access chat rooms in school.

#### **In and Out of school**

- If I bring a mobile phone to school it will be under the conditions of the Use of Electronic Devices and remain switched off and handed in to my teacher. I understand sanctions are in place as per our school's Code of Behaviour if I breach this (do not follow the rules).
- I will never send/share text messages, online message, photos, videos, emails etc. that are harmful and hurtful to another person. Nor will I comment, like or share content which is harmful or hurtful to another person. I understand sanctions will be in place if I do not follow our school's policies (Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Use of Electronic Devices Policy and AUP Policy)
- I will never give out my name, address, phone number to anyone online.
- I will not share personal information about another person online.
- I will always use my Username and not my real name on websites so that I can protect my identity.
- I will never arrange to meet in person anyone I meet online.
- I will not use my phone/I pad to take photos of people without their permission.
- I will not upload any photos without getting permission.
- My password is my own and I will not share it- even with my best friend.
- I will follow all the guidelines and rules set out in the school's Remote Teaching and Learning Policy in relation to online communication and 'live' lessons.

#### **Student Pledge for iPad Use**

- I will take good care of the iPad assigned to me.
- I will keep food and drinks away from my iPad since they may cause damage to the device.
- I will not disassemble any part of my iPad or attempt any repairs.
- I will use my iPad in ways that are appropriate.
- I understand that my iPad is subject to inspection at any time without notice.
- I will only photograph people with their permission and with permission from my teacher.
- I will only use the camera or the microphone when my teacher tells me to.
- I will only use my iPad as instructed by the teacher and use the right app at the right time.
- I will never use another person's iPad to cause offence or damage or upset.
- I will never share any images or movies/videos of people in a public space on the Internet, unless I am asked to do so by my Teacher.

I agree to abide by the statements of this acceptable use policy

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_