

Ballyhaunis Community School



Acceptable Usage Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signature: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

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| Commenced: | December 2024 |
| Next review due: | December 2027 |

Technologies Covered

Ballyhaunis Community School may provide Internet access, desktop computers, mobile computers or devices, video conferencing capabilities, online collaboration capabilities, message boards, email, and more.

As new technologies emerge, Ballyhaunis Community School will attempt to provide access as appropriate. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all available technologies, not just those specifically listed.

Introduction

Ballyhaunis Community School recognises that access to technology in school gives students greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate, and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life, and citizenship. Ballyhaunis Community School is committed to helping students develop 21st-century technology and communication skills.

To that end, we provide access to technologies for student and staff use.

This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that users are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally owned devices on school property.

- Ballyhaunis Community School's network is intended for educational purposes.
- All activity over the network may be monitored and retained.
- Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline.
- Misuse of school resources can result in disciplinary action.
- Ballyhaunis Community School tries to ensure students' safety and security online but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from use of school technologies.

We recognise that no technical system can replace online safety education.

- We shall embed online safety education in curriculum delivery, wherever possible.
- Teachers will model good practice when using technology and maintain a professional level of conduct in their personal use of technology, both on and off site.
- Teachers will have an awareness of online safety issues through regular training

To support our school in developing students' knowledge and understanding about online safety, we encourage parents/guardians to read and discuss the policy at home.

We ask all parents/guardians to support our approach to online safety by role modelling safe and positive online behaviour, such as sharing images, text, and video responsibly, and by discussing online safety at home.

This policy links to other policies, including:

- Anti-bullying Policy /Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

Safe use of Technology

At Ballyhaunis Community School we want students to enjoy using technology and to become skilled users of offline and online resources and media. We recognise that this is crucial for further education and careers.

The School will support students in the development of Information and Communication Technology skills. Make internet access as unrestricted as possible whilst balancing the safety and welfare of and security of students.

Students and their parents/guardians may find the following resources helpful in keeping all safe online:

- www.webwise.ie
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/>

General Guidelines

- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring themselves or Ballyhaunis Community School into disrepute.
- Students must never reveal their password to other students, even to those whom they trust. Students will be held accountable for all actions and consequences that take place on an account using their username.
- If students believe that the security of their password has been compromised, they must inform the ICT Coordinator/Year head /Principal immediately.
- Passwords should be complex in nature including capitals, lowercase, symbols, and numerals. Students must not interfere with, change, or attempt to adapt any ICT equipment including the removal of cables and peripherals.
- Students must inform a member of staff if equipment is not functioning appropriately and not attempt to repair it themselves.
- Food and drink must not be consumed in an ICT suite or in close proximity to any item of ICT equipment.
- The uploading and downloading of software is not permitted.

Procedures

- Students are responsible for their actions, conduct and behaviour when using technology at all times. Use of technology should be legal, safe, responsible, and respectful to others.
- If a student is aware of misuse, he/she should inform a teacher as soon as possible.
- Any misuse of technology by students will be dealt with under the School's Code of Behaviour.
- Students must not use their own or the school's technology to bully others. Bullying incidents involving the use of technology will be dealt with under the School's Anti Bullying policy (Bí Cineálta Policy) and Code of Behaviour.
- If a student thinks that he/she might have been bullied or that another person is being bullied, he/she should talk to a teacher about it as soon as possible.
- In any cases giving rise to safeguarding concerns, the matter will be dealt with under the School's child protection procedures (see the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy).
- If a student is worried about something that he/she has seen on the internet, or on any electronic device, including on another person's electronic device, he/she must tell a teacher about it as soon as possible.
- In addition to following the procedures in the relevant policies as set out above, all serious incidents involving technology must be reported to the Designated Liaison Person who will record the matter centrally.
- Students are educated about the importance of safe and responsible use of technology to help them to protect themselves and others online.

Unacceptable Usage - Mobile and Electronic environment

The School provides internet access and an email system to students to support their academic progress and development.

Unacceptable use of School technology and network resources may be summarised as, but not restricted to:

- Actions which cause physical damage to any ICT hardware, including peripherals (e.g., mouse, cables, wiring, printers).
- Creating, displaying, or transmitting material that is fraudulent or otherwise unlawful, likely to cause offence or inappropriate.
- Viewing, retrieving, downloading, or sharing any offensive material which may include content that is abusive, racist, considered to be of an extreme or terrorist related nature, sexist, homophobic, any form of bullying, pornographic, defamatory, or criminal activity.
- Threatening, intimidating, or harassing staff, students, or others.
- Intellectual property rights infringement, including copyright, trademark, patent, design, and moral rights.
- Defamation: meaning any statement that is published which has the effect of injuring a person's reputation. A person's reputation is injured if the statement in question tends to lower their person in the estimation of right-thinking members of society.
- Unsolicited advertising often referred to as "spamming".

- Sending emails that purport to come from an individual other than the person actually sending the message using, e.g., a forged address.
- Attempts to break into or damage computer systems or data held thereon.
- Actions or inactions which intentionally, or unintentionally, aid the distribution of computer viruses or other malicious software, e.g., use of equipment which is inadequately protected against viruses and spyware.
- Attempts to access or actions intended to facilitate access to computers for which the individual is not authorised.
- Using the School network for unauthenticated access.
- Using the ICT facilities for gambling.
- Using the ICT facilities for carrying out any illegal trading activity.
- Accessing material that is labelled 'not intended for minors', even if they have turned 18.
- Download and make public or intentionally view any material that is pornographic, abusive or age restricted.
- Disseminate the addresses of any material that falls into one of the above categories.
- Any other conduct which may discredit or harm the School, its staff, community, or the ICT facilities.

Virtual Learning Environment

Ballyhaunis Community School uses a Virtual Learning Environment, to support teaching and learning.

In addition to the guidelines above, students should comply with the following code of conduct when using the learning platform:

- The VLE is provided to maximise learning opportunities. All activities undertaken on the VLE by students must conform to this expectation.
- Content uploaded must be for educational use only.
- Discussion forum contributions on Office 365 and messages should be in support of learning and not defamatory or use inappropriate language in any form.
- Teachers and support staff will monitor the usage.
- Usernames and passwords must be suitably complex and not shared with any other person. Student activity on the VLE outside of normal school hours is subject to all of the guidance contained in this acceptable use policy and will also be monitored in the same way as activity during school hours

Microsoft Office 365 ICT Access

All staff and students receive an individual school email address and password where they can access Office365, providing access to Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint etc. This is the ICT learning/teaching platform used across the school and all electronic correspondence by students to staff must be via their school email/Teams. The same principles of positive classroom student/teacher interaction and 'Code of Behaviour' guidelines are applicable during any online interaction and communication. Netiquette is to be respected at all times. Access to the Office 365 platform is through the school website www.ballyhauniscs.ie.

- Teachers and students will use approved school email accounts and Teams for all communications. Personal communication in any context is **NOT** allowed. If an inappropriate personal communication is received by a staff member or student, it must be emailed directly to the Principal i.e. reported to the Principal.
- Teachers and students use of email or Teams is facilitated strictly in an educational context and access to personal email and/or social networking accounts is prohibited.
- Staff or students must not send emails or chats on Teams which are of a personal nature, emails or chats that are likely to cause distress, offence, construed as indecent, obscene, menacing, or in any way unlawful.
- Staff and students should not communicate via email/Teams at inappropriate times.

Email

- No email or attachment from an unknown source should be opened. These should be deleted.
- Ballyhaunis Community School regards emails to be identical to paper messages. Therefore, any written communication should obey the correct rules of grammar, capitalisation, and punctuation.
- Users must accept the privacy of email messages; care must be exercised when forwarding messages to ensure that privacy is not compromised.

Electronic mail may not be misused. The following are considered to be misuse and this list is not exhaustive:

- Unacceptable language
- Offensive messages
- Mass mail
- Hate mail
- Junk mail
- Sending or distributing games
- Personal graphic images
- Chain letters
- Hoaxes
- Anonymous mail
- Age- restricted content
- Distribution of viruses, hacks, or cracks

Laptop Acceptable Use

Laptops have been introduced into Ballyhaunis Community School as a learning instrument, and their basic purpose is educational. Anything that enhances their educational potential is to be encouraged; anything that hinders them achieving their purpose is to be prevented. As they are educational school tools, the notion of privacy will be treated as secondary to the achievement of school's educational purposes. Accordingly, if a teacher suspects that a student is using his/her machine for purposes other than educational during school time, that teacher will be entitled, and indeed expected, to intervene and inspect the contents of the machine to determine whether the facility has been or is being used for a purpose which is contrary to school policy. This would relate

specifically, but not only, to the storage of illegal music files, pornography, antisocial material, hacking material or material that infringes copyright legislation.

In Classrooms

- Students should not listen to music files while working without permission from the teacher.
- Students may not use E-mail facilities during class time unless instructed to by their teachers.
- Students may not play games on their computers during class time unless the games are part of the teaching programme and have been required by the teacher as a class activity.

Plagiarism

All learners have access to laptops and current syllabi require learners to use the internet for research and presentation purposes. In recognition of how easy it is to find and use online information and commit plagiarism, Ballyhaunis Community School is committed to teaching students how to become ethical users of information, so they become responsible digital citizens ready for further or higher education and the workplace.

Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's work – words, images, and ideas - without proper acknowledgement, and passing it off as one's own. This is fraudulent and is tantamount to stealing.

Types of plagiarism include:

- Verbatim (word-for-word) copying, often achieved by using the 'copy-paste' function.
- Paraphrasing without acknowledgment: merely changing a few words in the chosen text.
- Using ideas generated by another person and presenting them as one's own.
- Submitting someone else's work or assignment as one's own.
- Giving one's work to another student to use as his own is also fraudulent, as one is complicit in the act of plagiarising.
- Using Artificial Intelligence platforms to generate content and presenting it as original work.

Education

- All learners, teachers and parents are made aware of the seriousness of plagiarising and of the consequences thereof.
- Students are taught about plagiarism by their teachers.
- They are taught how to prevent plagiarism by referencing correctly using in-text citations and bibliographies, using the required referencing style.
- They are shown how to do responsible online research and how to identify reliable sources and fake news.
- They are made to understand the importance of academic integrity, critical thinking, and independent thought.
- Students are taught the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning and actions.
- Teachers are encouraged to set the example by referencing their own work and will assist students when setting assignments that require independent thought.

Consequences

Various levels of consequences will apply depending on the severity of the plagiarism and will be determined by the teacher.

Personal Devices and Mobile Phones

Students are not allowed to use mobile phones in the school. If students wish to make contact with home. They can do so at the school office. If parents/guardians wish to make contact with their children, they may phone the school and the message left will be conveyed to students in a timely manner.

- If a student is found with and/or using a mobile phone it will be confiscated and given to the Principal/Deputy Principal. A parent or guardian is required to call to the school to retrieve it. The Code of Behaviour has a special section dedicated to the sanctions imposed with unauthorised phone use.
- The school asks for parental support for this rule which enables students and teachers go about their daily work without distraction from mobile phones. It is recommended that no electronic personal devices be brought to school. These may be taken from a student if seen and kept in the Principals/Deputy Principal's office. They will be returned to the students Parent/Guardian at the end of the day on the understanding that they will not be brought to school again.
- Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices capable of recording audio and/or pictures are not allowed in school as their use can constitute a serious disruption of school life and of class quality as well as posing risks of breach of privacy and enabling bullying behaviour. In addition, the un-moderated access to the internet from such devices renders them unsuitable to be brought into school.

School Website

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork, or schoolwork on the school website 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 students or staff.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named.

Social Media

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of students and other staff and the reputation of Ballyhaunis Community School is protected. This policy relates to use of authorised Ballyhaunis Community social media platforms and the use of social platforms for approved school related activities. As approved by the school Principal and with regard to school based activities, students and staff may at times engage with personal websites such as social networking sites, for example Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, blogs, microblogs such as, platform X, chat rooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, and content sharing sites such as YouTube, this policy applies. The

internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media. The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services by students and staff at Ballyhaunis Community School that have negative consequences in line with the school anti bullying policy and Code of Behaviour.

- Staff (in line with the 'Dignity at Work' policy and Teaching Council code of professional conduct) and students 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 school community.
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of the Ballyhaunis Community School community on social media
- Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Ballyhaunis Community School into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent their personal views as the views of Ballyhaunis Community School on any social media medium.
- Issues regarding staff misuse of social media will be dealt according to the agreed teaching union and ACCS procedures. Student misuse of social media will be dealt with as per the school Code of Behaviour.

Sanctions

Failure to comply with the practices or procedures set out in this ~~of this~~ Acceptable Use Policy may result in disciplinary action. In accordance with the School's Code of behaviour any sanction which is appropriate and proportionate to the breach may apply.

This can include:

- Warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detentions and in extreme cases temporary or permanent exclusion.
- Any action taken will depend on the seriousness of the offence.
- Ballyhaunis Community School also reserves the right to report any illegal activities or policy breach that could be regarded as giving rise to criminal proceedings to the appropriate authorities.
- Anyone who mistakenly accesses inappropriate material should notify the teacher and the ICT Co Ordinator.

Modification clause

The Board of Management in consultation with the school management team reserves the right to modify the details of this policy at short notice in response to events or circumstances that were not foreseeable when the policy was being first drafted or subsequently reviewed. This policy will be periodically reviewed to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in the evolving landscape of technology and education. Any necessary revisions will be communicated to students, parents, and staff accordingly.

Conclusion

Ballyhaunis Community School is committed to providing a conducive learning environment that prioritises academic excellence, student well-being, and respect for one another. This Acceptable Usage Policy serves as a cornerstone in achieving these objectives and fostering a positive school culture

