

Ballyclare Secondary School

Acceptable Use of ICT in Ballyclare Secondary School – Full Version

Rationale

Part of the Ballyclare Secondary School Philosophy is to help pupils live effectively in a highly technological society. All pupils use ICT to enhance their learning across the curriculum, they all interact with material on the Internet, use Email as a communication tool and are being introduced to Virtual Learning Environments (VLE).

Teachers should guide pupils to appropriate websites where their use of such websites contributes to their learning and improves the quality of their learning experience. In order to guard our pupils from any inherent dangers, it is the responsibility of school staff to take appropriate steps to protect them from the dangers of open access to material found on the Internet while encouraging its use where its benefits are clear.

Email must be used in a responsible, effective and lawful manner. Email is provided as part of Ballyclare Secondary School's overall provision of ICT facilities for the purpose of teaching, learning and administration activities. Email use is subject to relevant legislation.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is being developed to provide a wide range of interactive activities, course support materials and access to supported structures of learning in a safe and monitored online environment. School staff will be responsible for the development, upgrading and updating of course contents.

Purpose

Internet

In using the Internet in a structured and supervised way Ballyclare Secondary School:

- Encourages pupils to access the Internet where it is beneficial and where such use supports their understanding of the Northern Ireland Curriculum and subject specifications.
- Ensures that pupils acquire skills that are useful for them not only in school but also in adult life, in continuing education and training and in employment. □
- Protects pupils from undesirable experiences and/or influences while using the Internet.
- Encourages pupils to work with due consideration of other users when using computer equipment.
- Trains pupils in good practice when using the Internet and the computer network.

VLE

The VLE:

- Allows pupils to access an online learning structure specifically designed to enhance their learning experiences.
- Facilitates the acquisition of transferable ICT skills that can be used in other curriculum areas in school, in continuing education or training and in employment.
- Encourages pupils to engage in valuable collaborative learning experiences and receive online mentoring support from peers and teachers.
- Provides centralised access to online tools

Email

In using email Ballyclare Secondary School:

- Encourages users to adhere to guidelines on the secure, effective and acceptable use of email.
- Outlines the standards that users are to comply with when using the facility, to ensure that users are aware of the legal consequences attached to the inappropriate use of the facility.

Guidelines

Internet

- The school provides a filtered and monitored access to the Internet for pupils and staff. Nonetheless, no filtering service can be completely secure, users should behave in a responsible manner.
- Pupils and staff are made aware that the school can and does track and record websites visited by them, the searches made on the Internet and e-mails sent and received by them.
- Pupils and staff are aware that files and communications on the school's networks are monitored. While normal privacy is respected and protected by password controls, **users must be aware that files stored on school servers are not absolutely and unconditionally private.**
- Outside school, parents/guardians bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they would normally exercise with information media such as television, mobile telephones, movies, radio.

Users are encouraged to:

- Use the Internet to investigate and research school subjects
- Develop their competence in ICT skills and general research skills.

Users are not permitted to:

- Copy, save and/or redistribute copyright protected material, without approval. If pupils are unsure if material is protected by copyright, teachers will provide appropriate information to guide them.
- Subscribe to any services or order any goods or services.
- Use interactive 'chat' sites.
- Access social networking sites e.g. Facebook.
- Use the network in such a way that disrupts the use of the network by other users.
- Download software or other files. (*ICT Technician exception with approval of SLT*)
- Load software on to any school machine. (*ICT Technician exception with approval of SLT*)
- Publish, share or distribute any personal information about any user (e.g. home address; email address; phone number; photos).
- Use another user's password or allow other users to use their password.
- Communicate to others any information, or engage in any activity which may result in the loss of or damage to another pupil's work.
- Use the Internet services provided by the school without a teacher's knowledge and permission.
- Retrieve, send, copy or display offensive information or images
- Use obscene, discriminatory or racist language, harass, insult or attack others
- Damage computers, computer systems or computer networks.
- Use school computer equipment for any other activity that violates a school rule or school policy.

VLE

- The school provides a filtered and monitored access to the VLE for pupils and staff. Nonetheless, no filtering service can be completely secure. Teachers and pupils using the VLE should behave in a responsible manner.
- Pupils and staff are made aware that the school routinely tracks and records discussion forums and chat facilities within the VLE.
- Pupils are aware that written communications on the VLE are monitored by teachers. While normal privacy is respected and protected by password controls, users must be aware that **written communications stored on the VLE are not absolutely and unconditionally private.**

Users are encouraged to:

- Use VLE to enhance independent learning.
- Engage in online learning activities including games and quizzes for the purpose of assessments, within the structure of the VLE.
- Use email facilities to communicate with other pupils, teachers, other schools and industry where such an activity is part of a structured online course.
- Collaborate with pupils from other schools.

Users are not permitted to:

- Use the VLE in such a way that disrupts the use of the VLE by other users.
- Download software or other files without permission.
- Engage in inappropriate, abusive or defamatory chat and forums.
- Publish, share or distribute any personal information about any user (such as: home address; email address; phone number; photos).
- Use another user's password or allow other users to use their password.
- Communicate to others any information, or engage in any activity which may result in the loss of or damage to another pupil's work.
- Retrieve, send, copy or display offensive or pornographic information or images.
- Use obscene, discriminatory or racist language, harass, insult or attack others.
- Upload or use malicious code in any form within the VLE.
- Search out or use security threats as this may constitute an illegal attempt to gain access to the VLE.

Email

The email systems are school property and the school reserves the right to monitor and to access any email messages. The use of email for incidental and occasional personal purposes is permitted for convenience but should not be used for private confidential correspondence. All users are responsible for ensuring that their email usage is within the regulations and is ethical and lawful. The sending of text or images that contain material of an offensive, indecent or obscene nature is prohibited. Access to the school email systems is available offsite.

Users are encouraged to:

- Use email facilities to communicate with other pupils, teachers, schools and industry where such an activity is part of schoolwork.

Users are not permitted to:

- Falsely represent the school via their school email account.
- Send inappropriate e-mails.

All users must adhere to the following guidelines for appropriate use of the email system:

- All emails must be formatted to the following standard to ensure readability for all users:
 - Background to be white with no graphics.
 - Font Style – Arial, Font Colour – Black.
 - Name and position held (if applicable) to be inserted followed by the standard disclaimer.
- No one should ever permit another individual to use their email account to either send or receive mail. The account holder is liable for the content of all communications via their account.
- Check emails regularly.
- Messages should be clearly addressed to those from whom an action or response is expected, "cc" should be used for other recipients of the message.
- *Use 'reply all' and distribution lists with caution* in order to keep the number of messages to a minimum and reduce the risk of sending messages to the wrong people.
- Do not send emails to 'Roving' Groups as these will be seen by individuals outside of the school.
- Consider the content of email (especially if it is of confidential or sensitive nature) and ask the question "does it really need to go to all of these recipients?".
- Respect privacy and consider this aspect before forwarding messages.
- It is the user's responsibility to manage their own email folders and keep within the quota limits set.
- To ensure the free flow of email around the system, all users should on a weekly basis delete unwanted messages from their *Inbox* and *Sent Items*. Likewise the contents of the *Drafts* and *Deleted Mail* Folders should be cleared.
- Unsolicited email, especially with an attachment, may contain a virus. If in doubt, do not open the attachment and delete the email.
- Do not try to carry out confidential or sensitive tasks or air controversial views on email.
- Enter a meaningful 'subject' field to help the reader anticipate the content correctly, and try to keep to one subject per message.
- Be polite. Messages sent by email can often seem abrupt, even when this is not the intention. Use professional courtesy and discretion. The use of all uppercase text in either the subject or the body of an email should also be avoided as this is deemed to be the email equivalent of shouting.

- Don't use all or part of someone else's message without acknowledgement. Don't edit someone else's message without making it clear the changes that have made and don't distribute other people's messages without permission.
- Email distribution group lists should only be used for matters of school business. To send to such a group list, the sender should normally be either a member of the group list concerned or a member of staff involved with that group.
- If a user needs to leave their workstation, they should at all times lock the workstation to prevent possible unauthorised access by another individual.

Disclaimer

All staff **must** have the following disclaimer included at the bottom of their email:

Any views expressed by the sender of this message are not necessarily those of Ballyclare Secondary School. This email and any files transmitted with it are intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender immediately by using the reply facility in your email software. All emails are swept for the presence of viruses. To help promote the use of electronic documents and to be kinder to the environment, please consider whether you really need to print this email.

Data Protection

All email falls under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and therefore:

- Under the DPA, all email transmissions which contain personal data may be disclosed in response to a request for disclosure, brought forward (through normal procedure), via the Schools Data Protection Officer. *'Personal data' can include a sender's opinion of another person.*
- Under the DPA, email messages may be disclosed to those referred to in them. The school is not responsible for any subsequent action to which a sender may thereby make themselves liable.
- The use of email, as a means of internal as well as external communication, falls within the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, email users who have access to email addresses have a responsibility not to disclose email addresses or email lists to an unauthorised third party without permission of the owner of the email address.

Sanctions

Sanctions imposed are a result of a breach or attempted breach of prohibited actions. The sanctions reflect the seriousness of an individual offence, are applied as soon as possible and in a fair and consistent manner. Where appropriate parents will be informed of breaches and what sanctions have been applied.

The sanctions imposed for inappropriate use of ICT facilities are:

- Verbal warnings – are given for attempts to contravene the rules or minor “one-off” offences.
- Offenders will be subject to a monitoring period of 4 weeks and continued use of the ICT facilities will be reviewed after this period.
- Very serious cases, will be immediately referred to the Pastoral Vice Principal/Principal.
- Due to the nature of the Email System and possible legal implications, penalties for misuse of email will depend on the seriousness of the offence, and be in accordance with current School/NEELB/DENI Procedures.

These policy guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures.