



Cross & Passion College, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare
Telephone: (045) 481524
Email: admin@cpckilcullen.com



Principal: Joe Leonard
Deputy Principals: Aisling Reigh, Sabrina Mills

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Digital Technologies & AI

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1. Policy Statement and Rationale

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets out the expectations, rights, responsibilities and sanctions relating to the safe, responsible and ethical use of digital technologies within the school.

The policy is grounded in:

- The school's ethos and commitment to student wellbeing and holistic development
- The need to maximise learning opportunities while minimising risk
- The requirement to comply with legal, safeguarding and data protection obligations

An AUP is a critical component of a school's Digital Learning Plan and provides both educational guidance and legal protection

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Promote safe, responsible and ethical use of digital technologies
- Support teaching, learning and assessment through appropriate digital use
- Develop students as competent digital citizens
- Protect all members of the school community from harm
- Ensure compliance with:
 - GDPR and Data Protection legislation
 - Child Safeguarding requirements
 - Department of Education guidance

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors
- All digital devices (school-owned and personal)
- All digital platforms and online environments
- Both in-school and out-of-school use where it impacts on school life

4. Guiding Principles: Digital Citizenship

All users are expected to:

Respect Yourself

- Use appropriate language and content online
- Protect personal information and identity

Protect Yourself

- Maintain privacy and security (e.g. passwords)
- Report unsafe or inappropriate behaviour

Respect Others

- Communicate respectfully at all times
- Avoid harassment, bullying or exclusion

Protect Others

- Report concerns or harmful content
- Do not share inappropriate material

Respect Copyright & Integrity

- Acknowledge sources and avoid plagiarism
- Use digital content ethically

Respect Technology

- Use devices responsibly
- Do not interfere with systems or bypass controls

5. School Responsibilities

The school will:

- Provide filtered and monitored internet access
- Deliver digital safety and wellbeing education (SPHE, Wellbeing, etc.)
- Provide training for staff and students
- Implement clear reporting and safeguarding procedures
- Promote awareness through initiatives (e.g. Safer Internet Day)

These measures reflect best practice in balancing technical safeguards with education

6. Acceptable Use of Digital Technologies

6.1 General Use

Users must:

- Use digital technologies for educational purposes only
- Follow teacher instructions at all times
- Report accidental access to inappropriate content
- Respect school rules regardless of location

Users must not:

- Access, create or share illegal, harmful or offensive material
- Attempt to bypass filtering systems
- Engage in behaviour that brings the school into disrepute

6.2 Internet Use & Content

- Internet use is a privilege, not a right
- Activity may be monitored for safety and security
- Users must not:
 - Access inappropriate content

- Download unauthorised material
- Engage in excessive or disruptive usage

6.3 Email and Communication

- Only school-approved accounts should be used
- Users must not:
 - Share login details
 - Send harmful or inappropriate messages
 - Use school email for personal social media accounts

6.4 Social Media

Users must not:

- Harass, insult or defame others
- Share personal or confidential information
- Represent personal views as those of the school

6.5 Personal Devices & Mobile Phones

- The use of personal mobile phones during the school day is governed by the school's Mobile Phone Policy (2025), which establishes a phone-free environment through the use of a Yondr pouch system.
- Students are not permitted to access or use mobile phones during the school day except in approved exceptional circumstances.
- Any use of personal devices for learning purposes will be through school-approved devices or under specific teacher direction where permitted.
- Devices must not be used:
 - Without permission
 - During assessments
 - To record others without consent

6.6 Images, Audio and Video

- Explicit permission required for recording
- Consent required for sharing
- Strict prohibition on sharing harmful or explicit content

7. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as behaviour carried out through digital technologies that harms others.

The school:

- Treats cyberbullying as a serious breach of policy
- Applies the Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Responds to incidents occurring both inside and outside school

A once-off harmful online post may constitute bullying due to its public and lasting nature (Please read in conjunction with the school's Bí Cineálta policy).

8. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

8.1 Educational Approach

AI is recognised as a support tool for teaching and learning, not a replacement for human judgement

8.2 Acceptable Use of AI

Students may use AI tools where:

- Directed or permitted by the teacher
- Used to support learning (e.g. brainstorming, drafting)
- Outputs are critically evaluated

8.3 Prohibited Use of AI

Students must not:

- Submit AI-generated work as their own
- Use AI to bypass learning or assessment
- Input personal or sensitive data

8.4 Ethical and Safe Use

All users must:

- Acknowledge AI use appropriately
- Verify accuracy of outputs
- Be aware of:
 - Bias
 - Misinformation
 - Data privacy risks

AI use must align with the principle of “human oversight at all times”

9. Data Protection and GDPR

- Personal data must not be shared without consent
- Digital platforms must comply with GDPR
- All users must protect confidentiality

10. Monitoring and Reporting

The school will:

- Monitor usage where appropriate
- Provide clear reporting structures:
 - Teacher
 - Year Head
 - Designated Liaison Person (if required)

Students are expected to report concerns immediately.

11. Sanctions

Misuse of digital technologies may result in:

- Warning
- Withdrawal of access

- Detention
 - Suspension or expulsion (in serious cases)
 - Referral to external agencies where required
- Sanctions are applied in line with the Code of Behaviour.

12. Implementation, Review and Evaluation

This policy will:

- Be developed through consultation with stakeholders
- Be ratified by the Board of Management
- Be communicated to all members of the school community
- Be reviewed annually

Regular review ensures responsiveness to emerging technologies and risks

13. Success Criteria

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured by:

- Evidence of safe and appropriate digital use
- Student understanding of digital citizenship
- Reduced incidents of misuse
- Integration of digital learning in teaching practice
- Alignment with Looking at Our School (LAOS) and Digital Learning Framework

14. Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson

Signed: _____

Principal