

Mercy Secondary School **ICT and Internet Usage Policy**

Introduction

In today's world, Information Technology is everywhere around us – both in work and at home and for young people it has become increasingly important in their lives. The use of ICT in education is of particular importance and its fundamental aim should be to foster in students a spirit of responsibility and self-reliance and to provide them with skills for life learning.

The use of ICT in schools provides students with the opportunity to acquire basic and essential ICT skills. For both students and teachers, it allows access to additional learning and teaching resources, offers greater involvement in local partnership, community and interschool links, facilitating new learning experiences for all concerned.

Objectives

- To build on the IT skills of the students entering the school community.
- To facilitate teaching more effectively.
- To encourage learning more effectively.
- To open up new learning opportunities for students.
- To engage teachers to use ICT in education.
- To allow controlled access to the Internet.

Policy Content

All students are provided with a network account and google apps for education account. This includes a school email address, cloud storage space and other content.

1st – 3rd Year Students

- 1 class period per week per class.
- Certain subject areas use ICT in class work (languages).
- Material covered includes Word Processing, Spreadsheets and Publisher.

TY Students

- 3 class periods per week (1 double, 1 single).
- Other subject areas to include ICT in class work.
- Students are encouraged to complete four modules of the ECDL examinations.

5th and 6th Year Students

- LCVP students have timetabled access to Computer Room for the completion of project work.
- Career Guidance – use of IT for research.

Special Needs

- Additional help and technology available to students with special educational needs.

School Policy on Internet Usage

- Acceptable Use Policy in place – requires parental agreement.
- Students abusing the system will be denied access to the facilities for a given period of time.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- Approve final policy.
- Evaluate policy on a regular basis.
- Consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

Principal, Deputy Principal, Post Holders

- Establish structures and procedures for implementation.
- Monitor the implementation.

Subject Teachers

- Instruct students in use of ICT.
- Implement the policy.
- Develop the educational value of ICT.

Parents

- Support the policy
- Encourage the development of IOCT in the school.

Students

- Complete assigned courses – ECDL modules etc.
- Be committed to the educational use of computers.
- Use the Internet for educational purposes.
- Treat with respect the ICT facilities provided by the school.

Implementation Procedures

IT Teachers

- Formulate guidelines.
- Implement procedures.

Subject Teachers

- Consider how best to integrate ICT into their subject area.

Guidance/Special Needs Teachers

- Design programmes tailored to individual students' need.

Indications to gauge the effectiveness of the policy

- Number of students completing various modules.
- Use of ICT in student's homework assignments.
- Increased use of computers by staff and students.
- Provision of computers in classroom.

Monitoring Procedures

- Principal and Deputy Principal to liaise with staff.
- Computer teachers meet regularly to review and plan policy.
- All staff to meet and plan for future use of ICT.
- All staff to outline their requirements for ICT.
- All staff to indicate if any software is required for specific subject areas.

Review Procedures

- Set an operational timeframe for the policy of approx two years.
- Consider the views and experiences of teachers, students and parents.
- Has ICT had a noticeable impact on students' academic performances (Special needs students in particular).

INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY

Staff and Pupils

- Any student who is deemed to have acted in contravention of this ICT Policy will be disciplined in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- When using the Internet, all users must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity laws, and all school staff (both teachers and support staff) are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with the rules of behaviour governing employees in the education sector.
- Pupils are responsible for their good behaviour on the school computers, just as they are, on and off the premises. While the use of information and communications technology is an important aspect of the curriculum, access to the Internet remains a privilege and not a right. It is given to pupils who act in a considerate and responsible manner, and will be withdrawn if they fail to maintain acceptable standards of use.
- Staff should ensure that pupils know and understand that no Internet user is permitted to:
 - retrieve, send, copy or display offensive messages or pictures;
 - use obscene or racist language;
 - Cyberbully, harass, insult or attack others;
 - damage computers, computer systems or computer networks;
 - violate copyright laws;
 - use another user's password;
 - trespass in another user's folders, work or files;
 - use the network for unapproved commercial purposes
 - intentionally waste resources (such as on-line time, paper, ink)

Location and Supervision

- It is an absolute requirement that all school staff in Mercy Secondary School ensure that access to the Internet provided to staff and pupils in this school is through a filtered service. All users should be aware that the school can and does track and record the sites visited and the searches made on the Internet.
- While using the ICT equipment and the Internet at school, pupils will be supervised. Student activities may be monitored and recorded
- All pupils must understand that they are to use the Internet appropriately and why the rules exist.
- Network administrators will review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. While normal privacy is respected and protected by password controls, as with the Internet itself, users must not expect files stored on the server (or on google apps cloud server) to be absolutely private.

School email and online collaboration

- Mercy Secondary School provides students with email accounts for the purpose of school related communication. Availability and use is restricted based on school policies. Email accounts should be used with care. Email usage may be monitored and archived.
- Mercy Secondary School recognises that online collaboration is essential to education and may provide students with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among students. Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful and courteous conduct online as offline.

Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Use: -

On-line activities which are encouraged include, for example:-

- The use of school google account for activities such as communication, storage, research and all other educational activities.
- Use of the Internet to investigate and research school subjects, cross-curricular themes and topics related to social and personal development;
- Use of the Internet to investigate careers and further and higher education;
- The development of pupils' competence in ICT skills and their general research skills.

On-line activities which are not permitted include, for example: -

- Searching, viewing and/or retrieving materials that are not related to the aims of the curriculum or future careers;
- Copying, saving and/or redistributing copyright protected material, without approval;
- Subscribing to any services or ordering any goods or services, unless specifically approved by the school;
- Playing computer games or using other interactive ‘chat’ sites, unless specifically assigned by the teacher;
- Intentionally transmitting of security threats over the school network. This includes opening or distributing infected files or programmes and opening files or programmes of unknown or un-trusted origin
- Un-authorized access to the schools wifi and network from personal devices.
- Using the network in such a way that use of the network by others is disrupted (for example – downloading large files during peak usage times; sending mass email messages);
- Publishing, sharing or distributing any personal information about a user (such as home address, email address, phone number etc.);
- Any activity that violates a school rule;
- Intentionally wasting limited resources (e.g. printing).

Advice for Parents

While in school, teachers will guide pupils towards appropriate materials on the Internet. Outside school, parents or guardians bear the same responsibility for such guidance as they would normally exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, movies, radio and other media.

Appropriate home use of the Internet can be educationally beneficial, and can make a useful contribution to home and schoolwork. It should, however, be supervised, and parents should be aware that they are responsible for their children’s use of the Internet resources at home.

Offering advice to parents is good practice and Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan will therefore advise parents that: -

1. it provides filtered and monitored access to the Internet for pupils;
2. will draw to parents attention appropriate guidance and advice on its use, which they might find helpful at home.

Such guidance and advice should include the following: -

- parents should discuss with their children the rules for using the Internet and decide together when, how long, and what comprises appropriate use;
- parents should get to know the sites their children visit, and talk to them about what they are learning;
- parents should ensure that they give their agreement before their children give out personal identifying information in any electronic communication on the Internet, such as a picture, an address, a phone number, the school name, or financial information such as credit card or bank details. In this way they can protect their children (and themselves) from unwanted or unacceptable overtures from strangers, from unplanned expenditure and from fraud;
- parents should encourage their children not to respond to any unwelcome, unpleasant or abusive messages, and to tell them if they receive any such messages or images. If the message comes from an Internet service connection provided by the school, they should immediately inform the Principal.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of

Signed _____ Chairperson

Next review date : _____

1st September 2XXX

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Internet Permission Form

As part of the school's education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the Internet.

This will allow students vast educational opportunities by helping them for example, to locate material which meets their educational needs, communicate with subject experts and participate in school projects with students in similar circumstances or from different cultures. In addition to the educational aspects of the internet, students will learn valuable skills for participation in the information age which may be useful for their chosen career.

The internet is a global computer network that is not controlled by any organisation. This means that information may change, disappear, and be controversial or potentially harmful. Although the school actively seeks to promote safe use of the Internet, it recognises the possibility that students may accidentally or deliberately access objectionable material.

Usage of the Internet therefore requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy. For the reasons stated above, it is important that the enclosed policy is read carefully and signed by a parent or guardian.

We appreciate that parents and guardians are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the school supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to allow access to the Internet as defined by the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Garrett Farrell
(Principal)

Permission Form

Please review the attached school Acceptable Use Policy, Sign and return this permission form to your teacher.

A: Mercy Secondary School, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath.

Name of Pupil: _____

Year: _____

Pupil

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.

Pupil's Signature: _____ Date: _____

B: Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for my son/daughter to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is designed 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 pupils access unsuitable websites.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Tel: _____

In relation to the development of the school website, I understand that if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the school website.

Signature: _____ Date: _____