



St. Colman's N.S.
Delvin Road,
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Co. Westmeath
N91DX74

Telephone: 0449340901
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reception@stcolmansns.com
Web: www.stcolmansns.com

St. Colman's N.S.

Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Date of Commencement: 24/03/2024



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General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to agreed sanctions will be imposed.

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

- To take good care of all school ICT equipment and use it responsibly in accordance with school policy.
- To treat other users with respect at all times.
- Not to engage in behaviours or misuse ICT resources in a manner that may bring the school into disrepute.
- To respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of the SPHE curriculum. This includes but is not limited to Stay Safe Lessons and My Selfie/Webwise resource and internet safety resources from Webwise etc.



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- As part of the school's Anti Bullying Awareness Initiative (reference Anti-Bullying Policy) workshops for pupils on Online Safety and Cyber Bullying are organised for pupils and parents on an annual basis.
 - Safer Internet Day will be acknowledged throughout the school in February each year.
 - School staff will be provided with continuing professional development in the area of internet safety and online communication and ICT technologies.
 - Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
 - Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
 - The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
 - Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
 - Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

Legislation and Regulation- the following legislation and Department circulars are relevant to Internet Safety.

- **The Education Act (1998)**
- **Education Welfare Act (2000)**
- **Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)**
- **Children First Act (2017)**
- **Data Protection Act 1998** this act was passed in order to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on a computer about individuals.
- **Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003** - this amendment extends the data protection rules to manually held records and also makes improvements to the public's right to access data.



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- **Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998** this act legislates against anyone who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses or sells child pornography.
 - **Interception Act 1993** - this act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence Authorisations are subject to certain conditions.
 - **Video Recordings Act 1989** - this act prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material which may lead to the depravation or corruption of the viewer.
 - **Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000** - this act governs copyright in Ireland.
 - **DES Guidance on the Continuity of Schooling for Primary Schools**
 - **DES Guidance on the Continuity of Schooling: Supporting Children at Very High Risk**

Use of the Internet

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in St. Colman's N.S. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in St. Colman's N.S.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, 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.

St. Colman's N.S. will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy. In such cases St. Colman's N.S. will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.



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St. Colman's N.S. implements the following strategies on promoting 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 and other curriculum areas.
- Pupils will be taught specific lessons on online safety by teachers. (Webwise/Stay Safe/Lessons for Internet Safety week)
- Pupils will use the school's internet connection only for educational activities with the permission of and under the supervision of a member of the teaching staff.
- Pupils will not intentionally attempt to visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials
- Pupils must report accidental accessing of any inappropriate sites etc. to their teacher immediately.
- Pupils will not knowingly upload, download or otherwise transmit material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person
- Pupils will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files.
- Downloading by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their specific area of study is only allowed under the supervision of and expressed permission of a teacher.
- Pupils will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving any information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity or security reasons.
- The school takes every reasonable precaution to provide for online safety, but it cannot be held responsible if students access unsuitable websites either deliberately or inadvertently.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in St. Colman's N.S. through our SPHE, induction and peer mentoring programmes.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.



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- St. Colman's N.S. participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

Board of Management, parents/guardians, teaching staff, and pupils.

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, students and representatives of the Board of Management and Parents Association.

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

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the Principal.



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Content Filtering

St. Colman's N.S. has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

Level 4: This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking category.

Students 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.

Email and Messaging

- 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.
- Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details; such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Pupils will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Pupils should 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. Pupils should report any such communications to a member of staff.



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Social Media

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of your school community are expected to follow when using 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 pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube. 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 in St. Colman's N.S.:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in St. Colman's N.S.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is not allowed in St. Colman's N.S.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is allowed with express permission from teaching staff.
- Pupils must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.



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- Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the St. Colman's N.S. 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. Colman's N.S. into disrepute.
 - Staff and pupils must not represent personal views as those of St. Colman's N.S. on any social medium.
 - Pupils will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

Personal Devices (Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices)

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as mobile phones, tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in St. Colman's N.S.:

- **Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones or personal electronic devices on the school premises or on out of school or extracurricular activities.**

Images and Video

At St. Colman's N.S. students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.



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Permission from parents/guardians will be obtained before photographs of students are published on the school website.

Students 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.

Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

School Websites

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.

Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

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

Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.

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



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Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on St. Colman's N.S. web pages.

St. Colman's N.S. will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online.

Cyberbullying

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.

Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently.

While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.



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In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, St. Colman's N.S. considers that 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.

When using the internet students, 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 student or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken by St. Colman's N.S. to ensure that staff and students 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 cyberbullying even when it happens outside the school or at night. In addition, the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures, 2013 defines cyberbullying as "placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another 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 cyberbullying is an integral part of the anti-bullying policy of our school.



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Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

Sanctions

- Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.
- Access to the Internet will be withdrawn from pupils who fail to maintain the acceptable standards of use.

This policy will be circulated to all new pupils on enrolment to the school and will also be available on the school website.



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Acceptable Use Policy For Parents/Guardians & Parents' Association

- Parents/Guardians must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, other members of the school community.
- Parents/Guardians or other visitors to the school should not upload images or videos featuring pupils or staff of St. Colman's to any social media platform. This includes images from in- school concerts, events etc.
- Parents/Guardians must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of any member of St. Colman's community without their expressed permission.
- Parents/Guardians must not engage in activities involving social media or any form of communications technology, which could bring St. Colman's into disrepute.
- Parents/Guardians should ensure that their child/ren adhere to the minimum age requirements for the use of messaging services and social networks.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Parents/Guardians are expected to take responsibility for their child's use of ICT and electronic devices (including mobile phones) and should monitor their child/ren's online behaviour outside of school. School authorities cannot be responsible for pupil online behaviour that arises outside of the school environment. However, the school will co-operate in so far as is possible with parents/guardians in dealing with reports of inappropriate online incidents that impact on the wellbeing of pupils and/or staff. Such matters will be dealt with in so far as is deemed necessary under the school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.



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St. Colman's will, where possible, inform parents/guardians of reported incidents of inappropriate online behaviour.

Parents' Association: Acceptable Use Policy for PA Social Media

All content posted by the PA must abide by copyright, child protection legislation, privacy and data protection law. The PA will not use the Facebook site, page or groups to express personal opinions or create, transmit, display publish or forward any material that is likely to harass, cause offence to any person or bring the school into disrepute.

Acceptable Use Policy For School Staff & Authorized Visitors/Outside Agencies

Email and Messaging

- Staff members are provided with an email address @stcolmansns.com via Google Suite for Education account.
- Staff members are responsible for password protecting their school email accounts.
- Staff must ensure that their _@stcolmansns.com email address is used for professional purposes only.
- Staff must not use school email addresses to set up personal/social media accounts.

Internet Access/Web Browsing and Downloading

- Teachers must always supervise access to the Internet by pupils in St. Colman's and websites should always be previewed before presentation to the class.



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- Where teachers seek to integrate a web page into a lesson, the web page must be fully previewed/evaluated to screen for inappropriate content, imagery, and text. Staff must ensure that school WiFi, Aladdin Pupil Management System and network administrator passwords are not disclosed to pupils or non-staff members.
 - Use of the internet by staff members or authorised school visitors/agencies to access or download offensive or inappropriate material is strictly prohibited at all times. Staff or authorised school visitors/agencies is not permitted to alter the school broadband filtering preferences in any form or manner.
 - Staff members may access the internet for personal purposes outside of pupil- teacher contact time only.
 - Teaching practice students, transition year pupils or adults or students on a work experience/ placement may only have access to the computer facilities with the permission of their mentor or supervising class teacher. All teaching practice and placement students must adhere to St. Colman's Acceptable Use policy.

Social Media

Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not use social media or the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, school staff, or other members of the school community.

School staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not post or share personal information, use, share, publish or distribute images about pupils, staff and other members of St. Colman's school community on any form of social media sites etc.

Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not engage in activities involving social media or any form of communications technology which might bring St. Colman's. into disrepute.

Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies must not represent their own



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personal views as those of being of St. Colman's on any social medium.

All school staff should take appropriate measures to manage their online privacy and professional reputation while engaging with social media on a personal basis. (see Webwise.ie and INTO.ie for specific advice on this)

Staff and authorised school visitors/agencies will adhere to the school guidelines on the use of personal Mobile Phones & Electronic Devices during the school day.

School Website and affiliated Social Media sites.

The school's website address is: www.stcolmansns.com

- Students will be given the opportunity to have photos, projects, artwork and other work relating to curricular and extra-curricular school activities published on the school website as per the consent form.
- Personal information relating to the student including their full name, home address and contact details will not be included on school social media or the school's website.
- Photos/Videos may be used for the production of specific school events e.g. Communion, concerts etc. These photos/videos and the photos/videos on our website should not be copied or posted to any social media or other website or published in any way.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested not to "tag" photographs or any other content. which would identify any children or staff in the school.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested to ensure that online messages and/or comments to the school's websites are respectful. Any messages written digitally are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- The Leadership Team will review the content of the website and the social media sites regularly.
- If any parent or guardian has any concern about the appropriateness of the content of the website or social media sites, then the Board asks



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that the matter be brought to the attention of the Principal as a matter of urgency.

- This Policy should be read in conjunction with our Data Protection Policy.

Personal Devices

- Any images or recordings taken by class teachers on smartphones or other personal devices must be downloaded to the school App/relevant school affiliated website and then immediately deleted from source.
- The use of E-readers may be permitted, under the supervision of the teacher. All personal devices are to be turned off during school hours.

Support structures and Education

- The school will keep students and parents/guardians of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.
- The school will run a programme on acceptable internet usage, for students and parents/guardians on a regular basis. This may happen on a face to face or remote capacity. This will cover several topics including cyber-bullying.
- Staff will regularly partake in Continuous Professional Development in relation to the development of AUPS, internet safety and cyber-bullying.
- Staff will be kept informed of changes to the policies and practices relevant to this policy.

Consistent with national laws, the Board of Management reserves the right to monitor the use of its information and technology resources and to take appropriate disciplinary actions, or denying future access privileges in cases of misuse. Staff/student use of the school's information and technology resources constitute consent to such monitoring. All such monitoring will be conducted in accordance with law including, where applicable, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR").



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Internet Safety Advice

Useful websites for further information on online and communications technology.

- www.webwise.ie (Information on Various Forms of Internet Usage)
- Get With it (Parents Guide to Cyberbullying)
- www.iab.ie (Internet Advisory Board)
- www.esafety.ie (Internet Safety Seminars for Schools/Parents)
- www.ncte.ie (Information on ICT in Education)
- www.saferinternetday.ie (includes information on Safer Internet Day)

Links with other School Policies

This policy is linked to the following school policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour,
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of St. Colman's N.S. has reviewed and ratified this policy on 20th March 2024.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: Mary Hayes.

Date: 20/03/2024