Rampark National School

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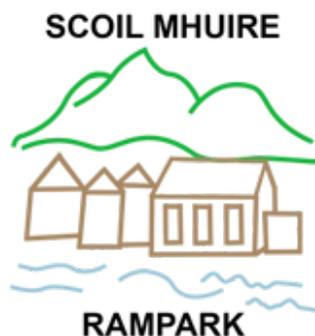
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Acceptable Use Policy

Introduction

This policy was formulated in consultation with the staff, Board of Management (BOM), pupils and members of the Parents' Association of the school. The knowledge of all involved, guideline resources available, in-service training and research was used to create this policy. In the interest of this policy the term "parent" denotes parents and legal guardians.

It should be noted that, while the school provides instruction in the use of technology, parents and guardians hold the primary responsibility for guiding their children in safe, responsible, and appropriate technology use beyond the school environment.

Our Mission

Rampark N.S is a Catholic primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. Therefore, Rampark N.S exists to promote the full and harmonious development of each child.

Home/School Partnership

The BOM and staff of Rampark N.S are proud of our tradition of good working relationships and partnerships with pupils and parents. The BOM and staff greatly value parental support, cooperation and partnership. We stand committed to continuing good relationships and partnerships.

General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils 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.

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

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Expectations for All

When using the internet, pupils, parents and staff are expected to:

- Treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- 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 to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet, including:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems to minimise exposure to inappropriate material.
- Prohibition of uploading and downloading non-approved software.
- Regular updates of virus protection software.
- Supervision of internet use within the school by a teacher.

Rampark N.S implements the following strategies to promote safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be educated in internet safety as part of SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- Teachers will receive ongoing professional development in internet safety.
- The school participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer and more effective internet use.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents. Please refer to management.
- Monitoring of internet activity (including sites visited).
- Internal monitoring data for network activity.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents and staff.

Inappropriate Activities

Staff and pupils are prohibited from engaging in:

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts.
- Racist material, pornography, promotion of discrimination.
- Any other information that breaches the integrity of the school's ethos.
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm

- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)
- Use of systems or applications to bypass filtering safeguards.
- Creating or propagating viruses or harmful files.
- Online gaming or gambling.
- Child sexual abuse material.

Content Filtering

Rampark 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.

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Pupil Section

Internet Use

- Pupils must report intentional access to inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Pupils must report accidental access to inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Pupils will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security, and/or network management reasons.
- Pupils will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Pupils will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Pupils will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.
- Pupils will not copy information into assignments without acknowledging the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful, or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic, impairing service for other internet users.

- Pupils will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by pupils of materials or images not relevant to their studies is a direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is allowed with staff permission.

Email and Messaging

*The email addresses act only as usernames to allow access to recommended education apps and resources. They do not allow the sending of emails between accounts.

- Pupils will use approved school domain accounts.
- Pupils will be made aware that their school domain accounts are monitored.
- Pupils must only use their school domain account for school-related activities and for registering of school-based activities only; the use of personal email addresses for school-based work is not allowed.
- Pupils will only use school domain accounts to register for approved educational online services, apps, or games.
- Pupils will immediately report any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening, or bullying in nature, and must not respond to or share any such communication.
- Pupils will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Pupils will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

All opinions expressed in children's work through the domain are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

Social Media and Messaging Services

The internet provides a range of social media tools for interaction. This policy sets out the principles that members of our school community are expected to follow when using social media.

- Pupils must not use social media, messaging services, and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse, or defame others.

- Pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff, and other members of the Rampark N.S community on social media.
- Pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Pupils must not engage in activities involving social media that might bring Rampark N.S into disrepute.
- Pupils must not represent their personal views as if they are the views of Rampark N.S on any social medium.

Images and Video

At Rampark N.S pupils must not take, use, share, publish, or distribute images of others without their permission. Taking photos or videos, using school equipment under the direction of a staff member is allowed as long as no harm is done to staff or pupils. Pupils 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.

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.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the pupil's home may not be a safe haven from such bullying. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Department of Education Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, Rampark 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.

- a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has continued in school, schools are required to support the pupils involved. Please refer to the relevant policy.

Artificial Intelligence

Rampark N.S recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible use:

- AI Generated material is allowed for assignments/homework if that use is properly documented and credited with an explanation of how the AI tool used and the extent of its contribution.
- AI Generated material is allowed for certain activities with prior school permission.
- AI Generated material is allowed for the purpose of research, brainstorming, and revising text.
- Pupils must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, other members of the Rampark N.S community
- Pupils must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring Rampark N.S into disrepute.

*Note: If used for research pupils must factcheck, check other sources and reference sources.

Personal Devices

Pupils who are found with personal electronic devices, which can send or receive calls or texts, in their possession or turned on during school hours will have them confiscated. They will be kept by the class teacher until the school contacts the parent/guardian to collect it. Pupils may not use any personal device with recording or image taking capability while in school or on a school outing. Any such breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will be sanctioned accordingly.

Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school. Where a pupil brings a mobile phone to school, the phone must be turned off before entering school premises and may only be turned back on once the student has left the premises. Upon arrival, the phone must be handed to the class teacher and will be securely stored in a locked cupboard during the school day. It should not be used, for any purpose, on school premises, grounds or during off-site school activities (such as school swimming or sports activities). The school does not accept responsibility for any loss of, or damage to, mobile phones brought onto school grounds.

Communication Technologies	Allowed	Allowed at Certain Times	Allowed with Staff Permission	Not Allowed
Mobile phones may be brought to school upon teacher request			X	
Use of mobile phones during school hours or activities				X
Taking photos on camera devices			X	
Use of hand held devices eg PDAs, PSPs			X	
Fitness trackers, smartwatches and any other digital trackers.				X
Use of chat rooms / facilities				X
Use of instant messaging				X
Use of social networking sites				X

Use of blogs			X	

Digital Learning Platforms (including Video Conferencing)

Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials. Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared, and personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.

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Staff Section

General Responsibilities

- Staff will actively monitor students' internet use during lessons; while their primary role is teaching, they will also circulate the room regularly to ensure appropriate and safe use of technology
- Staff will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security, and/or network management reasons.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Staff will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic, impairing service for other internet users during the school day.
- Staff will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Email and Messaging

- The use of personal email accounts is only allowed at Rampark N.S with expressed permission from the school principal. (see appendix 1)
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.
- Staff will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

- Staff 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. Staff should report any such communications to the Principal.

Social Media Use

- All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services, and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse, or defame others.
- Use of instant messaging services and apps such as Whatsapp etc. is allowed at certain times, by staff, in Rampark N.S
- Staff must not use personal email addresses for school-related communication.
- Discussions about pupils or staff on personal social media are prohibited.
- Staff must not engage in activities involving social media that might bring Rampark N.S into disrepute.
- Staff must not represent their personal views as those of Rampark N.S on any social medium.

Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here:
https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html

Images and Video

At Rampark N.S, staff must not take, use, share, publish, or distribute images of others without their permission. Taking photos or videos on school grounds or during school activities is allowed as long as no harm is done to staff or pupils. Staff 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.

School Website (and School Social Media)

Staff may choose at times 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.

- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of pupils or staff.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- The publication of pupil work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Rampark N.S will publish the first name only of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.
- Do we need to reconsider having the Facebook page private rather than public? Considering AI advancements with child images etc? There's a lot online about this lately in relation to school FB pages being public.

Cyberbullying.

In accordance with the Department of Education Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools; Rampark N.S considers that a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has continued in school, schools are required to support the pupils involved. The behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the schools Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Conduct.

Artificial Intelligence

Rampark N.S recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible use:

- Rampark N.S is committed to the responsible and ethical use of AI within our learning environment.
- Rampark N.S promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help pupils understand AI, its implications, and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information, and recognising potential biases in AI tools.
- Rampark N.S integrates AI into its educational processes to enhance learning, foster innovation, and promote the development of critical skills.

- AI Generated material is allowed for the purpose of research, creating activities and revising text.
- Staff must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, other members of the Rampark N.S community.
- Staff must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring Rampark N.S disrepute.

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Parent Section

Acknowledgment of Policy (see Appendix 2)

As the parent or legal guardian of a pupil at Rampark N.S, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and understand that internet access is intended 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.

Publishing Pupil Work

Parents accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, their child's schoolwork may be included on the school website. The school will publish first names only of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.

Support Structures

The school will inform pupils and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the internet.

Mobile Phone Policy

At Rampark National School, we have a Mobile Phone Policy as part of our Acceptable Use Policy to ensure a focused and safe learning environment for all students. By limiting phone usage until after primary school, we encourage our pupils to engage fully in their education and social interactions, free from distractions. This policy also helps protect students from potential online risks, such as exposure to inappropriate content or cyberbullying, and promotes responsible use of technology. Ultimately, the goal is to support the healthy development of our

students, allowing them to thrive academically and socially during their primary school years. Parent's will be invited to sign up to the mobile phone policy when their child joins the school.

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to the use of the Internet which teachers, pupils 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

All breaches of the AUP must be reported to the APII with responsibility for IT and the Principal. Misuse of the internet and digital technologies will be dealt with through the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

Ratification and Review

The staff, under the guidance of the Principal, will review this policy every three years or as the need arises.

Signed: Date: 17.02.25

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Appendix 1

- Oide
- CJ Falon
- Folens
- Educo

Appendix 2 AUP Agreement Form

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet and digital technologies. I will use the internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the procedures outlined in the policy.

Pupil's Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian : _____

Date: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above pupil, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and I understand that Internet access is intended 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.

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's school work may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing pupils' work on the school website.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3 Circular 0044/2025

On Friday 13th June the Department of Education released the linked circular- Banning the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day .