INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

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Date: 19/3/24

Acceptable Use Policy

Mission Statement

Mercy College is an all-girls Voluntary Catholic Secondary school with a co-educational Aonad under the trusteeship of CEIST. Mercy College is dedicated to the provision of quality Catholic education emphasising the academic, spiritual, moral, physical, social, global, aesthetic and vocational areas, which will enable students to achieve their maximum potential in a caring and nurturing environment.

Introduction

The Internet is an important tool for education, administration and social interaction within Mercy College. The purpose of Internet use in Mercy College, Sligo, is to raise educational levels and to aid the professional work of school staff and management including administration systems. Internet resources should be used in a safe and effective manner.

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will address all rights, responsibilities and sanctions associated with access to, and use of, the Internet within Mercy College, Sligo.

The Acceptable Use Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the e Learning team.

Aims

The aim of our Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students, teachers and parents will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe, responsible and effective manner.

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP - will be imposed.

School employee, students, volunteers etc. who breach the AUP may be dealt with by the Board of Management's disciplinary procedures and/or child protection procedures.

(See School's Child Protection Policy.)

Strategies

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

These strategies are as follows:

- In School internet sessions will always be supervised by qualified personnel.
- Systems, including filtering software, will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- The school will regularly monitor Internet usage.
- Students will not have access to administration passwords.
- Students must inform staff and self-exclude from photographs where picture permission consent is not given.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- To reduce the risk of viruses, the use of USBs is not permitted.
- Students and staff will observe good "netiquette" (i.e. etiquette on the Internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Printing and/or displaying racist, homophobic, gender inequality, etc. images or texts is strictly prohibited.
- Students are responsible for their own work.
- Student work should not be stored on Hard drive of Mercy College PCs.
- Staff should remember that the Digital Age of consent, regarding data protection compliance is 16 years of age.
- Staff should only use Office 365 apps for conferencing/videos services.
- Microsoft 365 is the only platform which should be used for communication between staff & students.
- Staff should not post images of students directly on to their personal social media pages.
- Staff must use the 'Cloud Cam' facility on the Mercy College App for capturing images of students.
- Staff should familiarise themselves with the list (on the Mercy College App) of students for which Picture Permission is not given.

World Wide Web

- Sites that the students use in school will be previewed by their teacher before use.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes and/or as deemed appropriate by the teacher.
- Teachers and students will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning, imagery, etc.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- All Internet users in Mercy College, Sligo should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored.
- The Right to Privacy of the individual should not be presumed.
- Students and staff (including people employed by the school/contractors etc.) will not visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students should inform their teacher if they inadvertently access information that makes them in any way uncomfortable. In the unlikely event that this should happen, the children will be reassured and their parents will be notified. Also, where possible, the offending URL will be noted and the service provider will be informed.

Email

- Students will not send or receive by any means any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or any material that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Internet Chat

- Students will only have access to closed chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.
- Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
- Students will not have access to closed chat room passwords.
- Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
- Meetings with someone organised via Internet chat rooms and discussion forums is forbidden

School Website

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork and school work on the World Wide Web with parental permission.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Students' work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without written permission.
- Permission will be sought for use of digital photographs, audio or video clips of individual students to be published on the school website.
- Photographs of students participating in school activities may, with parental consent, be published on school web page (unless parents have requested in writing that this personal pupil information including name, home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.)
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Mobile phone/iPads

Students are permitted to use their mobile phone in class IF their teacher permits it for teaching and learning purposes. Students should only use it for the purposes of the intended lesson.

Otherwise students who carry a Mobile phone to and from school are required to switch off their phone during the school day

Posting of photographs, video recording of school staff or students in Mercy College school environment on Mobile phones WITHOUT their permission is prohibited.

All students using an iPad are expected to comply with Mercy College Acceptable Use Policy.

Legislation

Internet users have been made aware of legislation relating to use of the Internet.
• Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
http://justice.ie/80256E010039E882/vWeb/pcJUSQ5YUHTP-en
• Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 -
http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1998.html
• Interception Act 1993 - http://www.acts.ie/zza10y1993.1.html
• Video Recordings Act 1989 - http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/ZZA22Y1989.html
- The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/legal/data-protection-legislation
https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/legal/data-protection-legislation
- Children First Act- http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/html

The following guides/manuals are available in school:
Be Wise on the Net …Information and Advice for Schools NCTE
Internet Safety Awareness Education Programme Teachers' Handbook SAFT Project (NCTE)

Sanctions

- Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action according to the School's Code of Behaviour, and/or the school's Anti Bullying Policy and/or the school's Child Protection Policy. The Code of Behaviour includes written warnings, notification of parents, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. *Please Refer to School's Code of Behaviour /Anti Bullying Policy/Child Protection Policy for further information.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- Mercy College reserves the right to discipline the student or staff for actions taken off-campus if they are intended to have an effect on a student or staff member or if they adversely affect the safety and well-being of a student or staff member while in school.
- References to Mercy staff members on the internet or any social networking site is strictly prohibited and will be viewed as an extreme breach of this policy.

- This policy will be reviewed in the school year 2021/22

Remote Teaching and Learning Protocols for Students

Mercy College has provided students with an individual Microsoft Office 365 email address and online storage.
Students follow “Netiquette” in line with school policy.
Students are expected to

- Be polite and respectful of other students and staff.
- Respect other students' privacy and security.
- Participate in class.
- Remember that any E-mail sent via Microsoft Office 365 must be school related.
- Dress appropriately and be seated in a suitable quiet area eg at a seat near a desk.
- Remember material posted must be in keeping with school assignments.
- Check email, Teams and Class Notebook at least twice a day.
- Remember the normal school calendar will apply.
- Remember Microsoft Office 365 is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the cancellation of your account.
- Only contact Teachers during school hours.
- Remember that School administration has the right to monitor all postings including emails and messaging.
- Remember that Mercy College School Code of Behaviour is applicable to remote teaching and learning including Anti- Bullying Policy, Digital Technologies Acceptable Use Policy and Acceptable Usage Policy for Devices.

Students should not

- Post any offensive material.
- Reveal their e-mail address or the e-mail address of others.
- Have personal information visible in background if in a Video meeting.
- Record classes or screen photograph a lesson. This is to respect the personal data of all, both teachers and students.

Signed:

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Chairperson
Date: