

# **POLICY FOR THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS AND THE INTERNET**

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**ST MALACHY'S COLLEGE, BELFAST**



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## 1. Introduction

This policy applies to all users of computer hardware, software and networks in St Malachy's College: students; teachers; non-teaching staff (administrative, technical and learning support); and those offered access to school resources. It applies to all school-owned computers and privately-leased devices, wherever they are physically located within the College or used in a partner school.

Internet access through wired and wireless networks is now available to students and staff in St Malachy's College. We are pleased to bring this access to the College and believe that the use of interactive technology offers huge potential for students and staff. The use of mobile phones are currently excluded from using this access; only authorised electronic devices are permitted on College premises. (Authorisation is gained by submitting a signed copy of the AUP for iPad Use) Our aim is to provide an Internet service that promotes educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation and communication in a safe, secure and effective e-learning environment.

The College's Policy for the Acceptable Use of Computers and Internet has been drawn up to protect all parties: the students; the staff and the College. The use of emerging technologies in the College carries responsibilities and behavioural expectations. Therefore, all users must sign a written agreement to comply (appendices), indicating that they accept the terms and conditions of this policy. Student users also require the consent of a parent or a legal guardian.

## 2. Computer Devices

The use of authorised school computers, laptops, netbooks, iPads and other devices in the College must be consistent with the College's ethos, educational goals and objectives. Common sense and good judgement is expected to be used at all times.

## 3. The Internet

Internet access and use in St Malachy's College is regarded as a school resource and privilege which can be withdrawn. The Internet system should be used for educational or school-related purposes only.

The Internet is an electronic information highway connecting many thousands of computers all over the world and millions of individual subscribers. This global network is not governed by any entity. This means that there are no limits or checks on the kind of information that is maintained by, and accessible to, Internet users. The educational value of appropriate information on the Internet is substantial. However, because the Internet is composed of information from a vast array of sources worldwide, it includes some material that is not of educational value in the context of the school. This material includes information that may be inaccurate, abusive, profane, sexually orientated, racist or illegal. In order to safeguard young people from any inherent dangers, it is the **joint responsibility** of school staff and a parent or guardian of each student to educate him about his responsibilities when using the Internet.

### Location and supervision

The College will ensure that access provided for staff and students through an Internet Service Provider is a filtered service. All users should be aware that the College can, and does, track and record the sites visited, the searches made on the Internet and e-mail sent and received by individual users. However, as information on the Internet appears, disappears and changes, it may not be possible to predict or control all that users may locate or use.

While using the Internet at school, students will normally be supervised. However, when appropriate, students may pursue electronic research independent of staff supervision, if they have been granted permission. In all cases, students are reminded of their responsibility to use these resources in line with the school policy on acceptable use.

The College Curriculum and e-Safety awareness training programme will ensure that all students understand how they are to use the Internet appropriately and why the rules exist. Students will receive appropriate guidance and training about how to use the Internet during ICT classes and during assemblies. Staff will be updated regularly during in-service training.

Network administrators may 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 servers to be absolutely private. The College reserves the right to examine any active or deleted files that may be held on the computer system or to monitor any Internet sites visited.

### **Wireless access (Wifi Policy)**

The College may decide, either selectively or on a whole school basis, to provide wireless access to students and staff.

The College is responsible only for connecting, troubleshooting connection issues, or configuring authorised computer devices to connect to the College's Wifi network.

On connection with the College's Wifi a user agrees to adhere to the College's Acceptable Use Policy.

On connection, it is acknowledged that:

- The wifi access is provided as a guest service.
- The wifi access will have suitable filtering in place.
- In any use of the wireless network, the school cannot guarantee that the wireless access is secure or that privacy on any site is protected.
- Use of the wifi is entirely at the risk of the user.
- The College accepts no liability for the loss of data, the misuse of data or the configuration of any changes made to the device.
- The College will monitor all internet traffic and websites accessed to ensure the system meets the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Misuse of the wifi network will result in sanctions in line with the Acceptable Use Policy.

## **4. College Website ([www.stmalachyscollege.com](http://www.stmalachyscollege.com))**

The College website is intended to:

- provide up-to-date information about our school;
- enable students and staff to publish work, information and guidance for a wide audience including students, parents, staff, governors, members of the local community and others;
- celebrate achievements using text, digital images and other multi-media formats;
- provide students with the opportunity to publish their work on the Internet;
- promote the school.

Parental permission will be sought before students' photographs, images or work can be published on the Internet. All classes may provide work for publication on the College's website

and class teachers will be responsible for ensuring that the of the students' work is accurate and meets acceptable use guidelines.

Personal information or individual email identities will not be published on the College's website. Staff will be identified by their title and surname unless they request otherwise. Permission will be sought from other individuals before they are referred to by name on any of the pages we publish on our website.

## 5. Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The VLE provided by the College can be found in the Learning Zone area of the College's website. It includes an expanding range of educational resources, comprising curriculum information, assessment and other online material provided to students as part of an online package to support their learning.

## 6. Email Service

The email service provided by the College is available to all students and staff. All users are expected to abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette, using email in an effective, responsible and lawful manner.

These rules include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Be polite.** Never send or encourage others to send abusive emails.
- **Use appropriate language.** Remember that you are a representative of the College on a global public system, where everything that is said and done can be viewed by others. Never swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. Illegal activities of any kind are strictly forbidden.
- **Do not reveal your password** to anyone. If you think someone has obtained your password, contact a member of ICT support.
- **Guard you privacy.** Do not reveal any personal information to anyone, especially the email address or personal telephone of yourself or any other user.

It is important to note that emails may be subject to scrutiny by the College authorities through filtering and monitoring facilities.

## 7. Terms and Conditions

Users of St Malachy's Internet, Intranet and email must adhere to strict guidelines. These guidelines are provided so that users are aware of their personal responsibilities. In general, this requires efficient, ethical and legal use of Internet resources. If a user violates any of these provisions, future access could be denied. Violations of this agreement will be referred to the appropriate school officials for disciplinary action. The signatures at the end of this document are legally binding and indicate the parties who sign have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance. The agreements, and any subsequent amendments, will extend for the period that a user is enrolled at, employed in, or visiting the College.

**Parents / Guardians** *It is important that you and your son read this agreement and discuss it together. When your son is given a username(s) and password(s) and is allowed to use the technological resources, it is extremely important that the rules are followed. As a parent/guardian you are responsible for supervision of your son's Internet use when he is not in a school setting.*

## 8. Acceptable Use

Users are responsible for their good behaviour on the school networks, just as they are off school premises. While use of Information and Communication Technology is a required aspect of the statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum, access to the Internet remains a privilege and not a right. It is given to users who act in a considerate and responsible manner, and will be withdrawn if they fail to maintain acceptable standards of use. St Malachy's College reserves the right to track and record the sites visited, the searches made on the Internet and e-mail sent and received by individual users. St Malachy's staff may prohibit or terminate any student's use of the Internet at any time as required. Users accessing the Internet within St Malachy's College consent to such monitoring.

## 9. Responsibilities

Computer devices must be used in approved areas only and must not be used in corridors, outside spaces or unsupervised areas of the College, unless specific authorisation has been given through a teacher by the Principal.

Each user must also take personal responsibility for using computer devices and Internet access in a manner consistent with the College's ethos, regulations and policies.

All users are expected to behave in a sensible and mature way, respecting others at all times and abiding by the following rules:

### No user is permitted to:

- Give anyone else access to their username(s) or password(s), even for short-term use
- Attempt to introduce any unlicensed applications
- Download any executable, music and/or video files when using the College's Internet provision, unless specific authorisation has been given through a teacher by the Principal
- Engage in deliberate attempts to damage, or disconnect computer equipment or peripherals, alter hardware or software components, change computer setups, develop or activate viruses, install unauthorised software or change settings
- Intentionally corrupt, interfere with or destroy any other user's information, including passwords, data or files, or to misrepresent others on computer devices / networks
- Release any personal details about themselves, another student or a member of staff over the Internet. (This includes reference to age, names, addresses or contact details)
- Use the College's Internet access for business, profit, advertising or political purposes
- Use the Internet for subscribing to services or inappropriate newsgroups
- Order goods and services on the College networks using credit cards is prohibited, unless specifically authorised by the Principal
- Use non-educational games. Only educational games may be used with the permission of a teacher or supervisor.
- Use College authorised email systems, unless authorised otherwise by the Principal
- Leave their account open at the end of any session
- Damage computer devices, computer systems or computer networks
- Engage in any activity which might compromise the security of the College's networks
- Bypass, or attempt to bypass, the College's protection measures. Breaches of security should be reported immediately to appropriate school officials

- Breach any terms of the Computer Misuse Act or Data Protection Act
- Use computer devices or networks to engage in cyberbullying
- Send, access, upload, download, or distribute material containing any inappropriate content, such as offensive, profane, threatening, pornographic, obscene or sexually explicit materials
- Send, access, upload, download, or distribute material containing offensive language, derogatory remarks or other content not in keeping with the College's ethos and policies.
- Breach privacy laws – posting and/or distributing photographs or audio-visual recordings taken of any persons is strictly prohibited without their expressed consent
- Violate any copyright laws
- Register for, or use, Internet Chat Rooms
- Eat food or drink near computer equipment
- Intentionally waste resources (such as online time and consumables)
- Engage in any activity which could bring St Malachy's College into disrepute

### **Use of iPads**

Ipads should be considered the same as any other technological tool used in school. All iPad users in the College should abide by the following rules:

- Follow the College's Acceptable Use Policy with regard to iPad usage
- Ensure that all Apps meet the requirements of the College's Acceptable Use Policy
- Ensure that the security PIN of your device is held only by you and not divulged to others. Ipads should be kept secure at all times
- Use of the camera only in line with the whole-school Child Protection Policy and data protection legislation

## **10. Consequences of Misuse / Sanctions**

Violations of the above rules will be referred to the appropriate school officials. They will be regarded as a major breach of school discipline and may result in one or more of the following sanctions depending on the nature, seriousness and frequency of the offence:

- the temporary or permanent disabling of the user's access to their C2K and / or wireless accounts;
- a temporary or permanent ban on Internet access using the College's wired and/or wireless networks;
- a temporary or permanent loss of privileges regarding the use of computer devices in the College;
- additional disciplinary action by the College, in line with existing practice, up to and including expulsion and any subsequent legal action; and
- Violations of UK law being reported to the appropriate authorities.

St Malachy's College makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service that is provided and will not be responsible for any damages suffered; this includes loss of data resulting from delays or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors or omissions. Use of information obtained via the Internet is at the user's risk. No guarantee of complete privacy is made.