St. John's Education Centre Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) of Internet and Communications Technology

1. Introduction

At St. John's Education Centre, digital technology is an integral part of the learning environment. This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines clear guidelines for the safe, respectful and responsible use of the centre's digital resources. Its purpose is to support a positive digital culture where all users - students, staff and the wider St John's community - can engage meaningfully with technology while minimising risks and promoting wellbeing.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all users of St. John's Education Centre's ICT resources, including students, staff, volunteers, parents and carers. It governs access to the internet, laptops, digital devices, communication platforms and all related systems used within or associated with the centre. It is to be read in conjunction with the centre's Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement.

3. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote the safe, ethical and responsible use of ICT resources.
- Protect students and staff from risks associated with digital technologies.
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Foster a digital environment that enhances teaching and learning.
- Encourage respectful digital citizenship and positive online behaviour in line with the centre's values and the Anti-Bullying Policy.

4. General Principles

All users of St. John's ICT systems are expected to:

- Treat others with courtesy and respect at all times, both online and offline.
- Use digital devices responsibly and for educational or administrative purposes.
- Refrain from engaging in any behaviour that could bring the centre into disrepute.
- Respect the privacy, dignity and rights of all members of St John's community.

5. Internet Safety

St. John's Education Centre promotes a proactive and preventative approach to internet safety through the following measures:

- **Education**: Students are provided with age-appropriate guidance on responsible internet use, digital citizenship and online risks as part of their induction programme.
- **Content Filtering**: The centre uses a web content filtering system aligned with Department of Education recommendations to block access to inappropriate or harmful material.
- **Antivirus Protection**: All devices are equipped with antivirus software, which is regularly updated to minimise risks associated with malware, viruses and inappropriate content.
- **Monitoring**: Internet usage on all school-managed devices may be monitored and recorded. This is to help ensure safety, compliance with the AUP and protection against misuse or access to unsafe or harmful content.
- **Supervision**: Staff supervise and support students' use of digital devices during school activities to promote responsible and appropriate online behaviour.
- **Reporting Procedures**: Students are encouraged to report accidental access to inappropriate content or any online safety concerns to a staff member immediately.

6. Use of ICT Resources

- Students are provided with laptops for educational purposes.
- Students will follow staff instructions, accessing only approved applications, websites and platforms.
- Electronic communication (e.g., email) must only occur with staff permission and for learning purposes.
- Use of cameras, microphones and recording functions is only allowed under staff direction and with consent from those involved.
- Students must not take, share or publish images or recordings of others without clear permission.
- Accessing, downloading or distributing illegal, offensive, hateful or otherwise objectionable content is strictly prohibited.
- Any accidental access to inappropriate material must be reported to a staff member or the Education Programme Leader, immediately.
- Impersonating others or engaging in any form of identity theft is forbidden.

7. Personal Devices

- The use of personal devices (e.g., mobile phones, smartwatches) by students during school hours is strictly prohibited unless explicitly authorised by staff - for instance, to support a medical need.
- All students must hand in their mobile phones to the office at the beginning of the school day and collect them at the end.
- Students are not permitted to bring smartwatches or any other devices with internet access or messaging capabilities onto the premises.

8. Cyberbullying, Social Media and Online Communication

St John's Education Centre defines bullying in accordance with the *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.* Cyberbullying and any targeted online harm are taken seriously and addressed under the centre's Anti-Bullying Policy.

- All users must treat others with respect when using digital communication tools, whether for educational or personal purposes.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, or humiliation of others online is strictly forbidden and subject to disciplinary action.
- Use of social media platforms or messaging apps (e.g., Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok) by students is not permitted during school hours.
- Staff and students must not use social media to harass, defame or insult any member of St John's community.
- Personal information about any student or staff member must never be posted or shared on social media.
- Email accounts provided by the centre may only be used for educational and official communication purposes - not for registering on social media or external services.

9. Sanctions

Any misuse of digital technologies may lead to disciplinary consequences, including:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Loss of access to ICT resources
- Communication with parents/guardians
- Suspension or expulsion in serious cases

St. John's Education Centre reserves the right to report illegal activities to relevant authorities, including An Garda Síochána and TUSLA.

10. Policy Review
This Acceptable Use Policy will be reviewed regularly in consultation with staff, students, parents/guardians and the Management Committee to ensure it reflects technological changes and best practices.

All users are required to read and agree to this policy before accessing the centre's digital systems

By adhering to this policy, all members of St. John's Education Centre help create a secure, respectful and focused learning environment where digital technologies support and enhance educational experiences.

Acceptable Use Policy Acknowledgement Form

St. John's Education Centre
This form must be signed and returned before access to school ICT resources is granted.

Section A – To be completed by the student
I have read and understood the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for St. John's Education Centre.
I agree to use the school's ICT resources responsibly and in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the policy.

I understand that if I breach the rules, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.

Student Name (PRINT): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section B – To be completed by the parent/guardian
I have read and discussed the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) with my child.

I understand the importance of the guidelines and support the school's efforts to provide a safe and respectful digital learning environment.

I give permission for my child to use the school's ICT resources under the conditions outlined in the AUP.

I understand that internet usage may be monitored and that appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for misuse.

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____