



Digital Technology Policy including Acceptable Usage

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Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure best practice when using ICT for the entire school community including safe and appropriate usage, maintenance and ergonomics. The Acceptable Use Policy helps 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 and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning.

When using the internet students, 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 in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- 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 is not permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school requires school permission.
- Internet use by students, within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

The school encourages parents to become involved and aware of ICT in their child's life and within the whole school community. CWETNS requests that parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Canal Way ETNS. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in Canal Way ETNS.

ICT Usage in Canal Way ETNS

CWETNS recognises the integral part ICT plays in all parts of the school, in curricular and non-curricular areas, and makes all efforts to ensure it is used successfully and safely at all levels. The aim of this policy is to ensure best practice when using ICT for the entire school community including safe and appropriate usage, maintenance and ergonomics. The use of ICT in CWETNS includes but is not limited to:

School Administration

- Pupil-related administration including report cards, standardised tests results, attendance records, permission records etc. using Aladdin
- Staff email addresses
- Communication with parents using Aladdin and Zoom

Teaching and Learning

- Teacher planning, cuntaisí míosúla & administration (stored securely on Google Drive)
- Supporting the teaching and learning across all curricular subjects e.g. Google Slides, YouTube clips, interactive games, word processing, researching, creating digital books and comics, project work, digital story-telling, recording of composition etc. Subject-specific programmes e.g. irishhomework.ie in Gaeilge, DabbleDoo in Music
- Publisher-related resources e.g. www.cjfallon.ie www.folens.ie
www.edcolearning.ie www.spellingsforme.ie
- Pre-recorded lesson content e.g. using Seesaw for infant classes
- Presentation of pupil learning
- Assigning, completing and correcting homework
- Support distance teaching and learning in the event of prolonged classroom/school closure e.g. closure due to Covid-19, or in the event of prolonged absence of a child who has been notified by the HSE to restrict their movements for minimum 10 days due to Covid 19 exposure

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- Assistive technology if advised by psychologist
- Sound field systems/ Phonak systems
- iPads

Roles & responsibilities

Digital technologies are everyone's responsibility

- The school, in particular the Board of Management, has overall responsibility for all digital technologies and equipment e.g. desktops, teaching laptops, iPads, projectors, interactive whiteboards, printer/photocopiers etc.
- The NCTE provides a filtered router to ensure safe internet access. However, all users are responsible for verifying that all content used is appropriate.
- The ICT Coordinator is responsible for supporting and promoting best practice in the use of digital technologies equipment (see examples above) They oversee the effective running of ICT in the school, including but not exclusively
 - the school website and other forms of social media,
 - purchasing including issuing tenders and awarding contracts,
 - liaising with technology suppliers (Micropro and GreenIT),
 - troubleshooting
 - liaising with the Principal and Board of Management on ICT-related matters.
- All staff who have use of digital technologies equipment are responsible for its daily safe-keeping and appropriate use.
- In the event of a digital technologies issue arising, staff are asked to send an email to micropro or to call them (01) 493 0514 indicating the ICT issue they are having.
- Teachers are not permitted to use personal devices such as mobile phones, personal laptops and tablets to take photographs, videos or sound recordings. Each class/teacher has been provided with a school camera or can use school ipads for this too.

Content Filtering

Canal Way ETNS has chosen to implement **Level 4** on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network. 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.

Internet Use

Canal Way ETNS use the following initiatives and teaching resources to educate the children about expected online behaviour and online safety:

- Webwise teaching resources.
- CWETNS Anti-bullying Policy.
- Anti-bullying Week.
- External speakers and visitors including An Garda Síochána.
- Internet safety events such as Safer Internet Day feature on the teaching calendar.
- Stay Safe Programme.
- Observation and monitoring of behaviour during ICT lessons.

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. The following is a non-exhaustive list of rules for internet use in Canal Way ETNS.

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials or language.
- Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students and 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.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Students 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.

Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

Email, Messaging and Commenting

Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed. The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Canal Way ETNS. Students are only allowed to use their school Google account in school and on the school computers or when otherwise advised by their school teacher. The email functionality in this has been turned off.

- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students 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.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.
- Students 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 teacher.

All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

Personal Devices

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Canal Way ETNS :

- Students should avoid bringing personal internet-enabled devices into Canal Way ETNS.
- Students are not allowed to use personal mobile phones, whether internet enabled or not devices during school hours 08.30hrs - 14.10hrs*. If it is essential a mobile phone is brought to school for commuting purposes it should remain powered off in their school bag during school hours.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time. Under no circumstance should a mobile phone be brought to the school yard.

*Unless otherwise approved by the school principal for medical reasons etc.

Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks, and refers to all social networking sites. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of our 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, staff and the reputation of the school is protected. This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example BeReal, 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.

Rights and Responsibilities

Staff, students, parents and guardians are expected to show respect to all members of the school community.

Staff will include cyber safety awareness in their planning throughout the year at all class levels. There will be a whole school focus on cyber safety and our digital footprint on Safer Internet Day annually.

Parents and guardians will be responsible for being aware of and informed about their children's online activity and be proactive in the supervision and guidance of their children taking into account this policy and in particular the school's core values.

Student Guidelines

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in Canal Way ETNS .
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is not allowed in Canal Way ETNS.

- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.

When using social media, students are expected to:

- Read and agree to the terms and conditions of various social media sites as many of them have age restrictions for their use e.g. Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Are aware of what they are posting online and that social media sites and applications are public forums.
- Will not access social networking sites during the school working day.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.
- Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten other members of the school community.
- Do not make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the school community.
- Do not harm the reputation of CWETNS or those within its community.
- Do not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the CWETNS community (student, parents or staff).

Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media in SPHE lessons

Parent/Guardian Guidelines

Classroom blogs and other social media tools open up communication between students, parents and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a large impact on learning at CWETNS. The school encourages parents to participate in such activities when appropriate but requests that parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

Parents/Carers should:

- Be aware that many social media sites have age restrictions. Parents need to monitor their children's online social media activity, and read the terms and conditions of various social media sites and applications their children are

interested in using. Parents need to be aware that many of them have age restrictions for their use e.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and BeReal are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.

- Be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their children to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply
- Seek appropriate permission from any individual involved before uploading photos, audio or video,
- Parents need to.
 - Not share confidential information, internal school discussions or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
 - Not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the CWETNS community and its members.
 - Not use social media sites while helping on school activities or tours.

Parents/carers should be aware of the threats to mental health that children can face as a result of using ICT. A healthy and open culture should be encouraged at home in regards to ICT. Basic rules such as time limits and places of use should be agreed to and search history and security controls should be checked regularly to ensure internet safety at all times. Parents/ carers are encouraged to visit <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/> for further support and guidance.

Staff and Teacher Guidelines

- Staff should not accept students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.
- Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. If staff identify themselves online as affiliated with CWETNS then they need to be aware that they are by definition representing the entire school community. Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school's values and ethos. Section 2 Professional Integrity from the teachers code of conduct states teachers "*should avoid conflict between their professional work and private interests which could reasonably be deemed to impact negatively on pupils/students.*"
- Staff should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the CWETNS community and its members.
- The staffroom in Canal Way ETNS is a phone free zone.

- When contributing online, staff should not post or share confidential student information.

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>

Teachers should be mindful of their Code of Professional Conduct when using Social Media.

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/publications/fitness-to-teach/code-of-professional-conduct-for-teachers1.pdf>

All members of the CWETNS community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all social media interactions. Staff, students and parents will not act in such a way that the image of CWETNS is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms members of the school community.

- 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.
- Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Canal Way ETNS into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of being Canal Way ETNS on any social medium.

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

Canal Way ETNS digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. Students must only use their school email for accessing the school digital learning platform. Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials. Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared. Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.

Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.

All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.

The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).

Prior permission from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

Remote Learning Policy:

Zoom and Seesaw will be used frequently during school closures and within classes during COVID / future necessary restrictions. The following applies:

User Agreement

- Teacher/Additional Needs Assistants (ANA) accounts will be set up using their school email address. Staff will not share their personal/private email addresses with students. Contact with staff should continue through the school email address office@canalway.org.
- Pupils' Parents/Guardians will be required to give permission through Aladdin for the use of Zoom in their home.
- Users will be obliged to read and adhere to the terms and conditions set by Zoom and Youtube specifically. Nothing in this policy shall be used or relied upon to void those terms and conditions.
- The link to the Zoom meeting is for the sole use of that student and are not to be shared under any circumstances with any third party without prior consent from staff.
- Device cameras must remain on during the Zoom session. If your child does not want to see themselves on the screen, they can disable the view of themselves using their settings. All children will have the option of disabling their microphone during the session, but they must initially present themselves using the microphone and camera.
- Whilst a session outline will be planned before zoom meetings, due to the nature of a live video there is the possibility that a child may become overwhelmed / frustrated and behave inappropriately and as such parents/guardians must be aware of this risk when allowing their children to partake in any Zoom session.
- Any misbehaviour or inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Any Zoom session or Youtube video is strictly for use by the intended /invited participants only. The content covered in the session will remain the property of the teacher/ANA/school and should not be recorded or shared with any outside parties in accordance with GDPR.

- The student Zoom sessions are not an opportunity for parent/teacher discussions meetings.
- Staff reserve the right to end the meeting at any point should they feel the need to do so.

In line with GDPR and Child Protection Guidelines, please note the following for Zoom meetings:

- Child and family members must be appropriately dressed.
- Child must be in a non-private space in their home (i.e. not bedroom)
- Child's parent/appropriate adult is asked to supervise the meeting
- The background visuals during a Zoom meeting should be appropriate (it is important that the background video images are appropriate for other students and staff)
- Appropriate language should be used throughout the interaction

Any recording or screenshots of live Zoom sessions (audio/visual) will be considered a major misdemeanour in line with our Code of Behaviour and a breach of GDPR.

Images and Video

At Canal Way ETNS 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. Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

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 and appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána, will be informed.

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

Inappropriate Activities

Canal Way ETNS 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.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Canal Way ETNS participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

The following is a non exhaustive list of Inappropriate Uses of the Internet which will result in serious consequences. Children are encouraged to share with their teacher or other member of staff if they are aware of any inappropriate internet use in Canal Way.

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- Misuse and fraud legislation
- Racist material
- Pornography
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
- Using school systems to run a private business
- Use of systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files

- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

Sanctions

Misuse of ICT in (or related to) the school will result in:

- Necessary action according to the Canal Way Behaviour Policy.
- Withdrawal of permission for the students from using computers and the internet.
- Parents will be informed.
- Where gross misbehaviour occurs, the Board of Management will be informed and will follow the School Behaviour Policy.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

Inappropriate Use of the internet or school ICT resources by any staff member will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management and reported to the An Garda Síochána if appropriate.

Canal Way ETNS will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases Canal Way ETNS will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Parents/carers are urged to ensure their child abides by the age restrictions on social media apps, games, films etc. In the event that a child is consuming inappropriate content online, and it impacts on class behaviour or student wellbeing, the parents/carers will be asked to meet with the school principal and class teacher. If any member of the school community is unsure of an age limit for a game/app/program the school recommends checking with www.commonsemmedia.org

School Website

Canal Way recognises the school website as a great communication tool between ourselves and the wider school community. Canal Way ETNS will primarily use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Canal Way ETNS web pages. Canal Way ETNS 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.

All teaching staff have permission to upload school related work to the school website. The website is regularly checked by the school principal and Website Post holder to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff. Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the website. The publication of student work will be coordinated by the Website Post Holder.

The school has a twitter account '@canalwayetns'. This is used to post updates on events. Children's photographs are not posted on Twitter. The school principal and Website Post holder manage this account.

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.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Canal Way ETNS 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 Canal Way ETNS 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 of school hours. 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.

Legislation and Recommended Reading

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)
- Interception Act 1993
- 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
- Tusla Safeguarding: A guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice Appendix 7 Online Safety

Ratification and Communication

This policy will be in operation in the school year 2023, having been ratified by Staff and BoM. Every teacher will be provided with a copy of this policy for their files.

Date of next policy review: 2026

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: ***Theresa Ní Mhurchú***

25.04.2026

School Principal: ***Dermot Stanley***

25.04.2026