



# **Edmund Rice College, Carrigaline, Co. Cork Acceptable Use Policy**

This Policy is drafted in-line with the Edmund Rice College Carrigaline Child Safeguarding Statement, Edmund Rice College Carrigaline Data Protection Policy, Edmund Rice College Carrigaline Procedure for Handling a Personal Data Breach, Edmund Rice College Carrigaline Code of Behaviour, Edmund Rice College Carrigaline Anti-Bullying Policy and other relevant school policies.

## **This policy refers to:**

- Appropriate and safe use of information and communication technology (ICT)

*For the purpose of this policy, the words technology and device shall be taken to mean any personal electronic items, such as (but not restricted to) computers, laptops, tablets, cameras, mobile phones, smartwatches, e-Readers, gaming devices such as Xbox, etc. It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will be involved in the review of this policy on a regular basis.*

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## **1. Rationale for Acceptable Use Policy**

The use of Information and Communications Technology (hereafter “ICT”), social media, mobile phones and other devices is now a feature of modern society and such technology is integral to the lives of most of our students. Edmund Rice College uses instructional technology as one method of teaching and learning and, in order to support our students in becoming proficient in the competencies essential for success in a 21st Century learning environment, the school provides a variety of resources to support its curriculum. However, the school’s classes and activities need to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. It is important that all those associated with Edmund Rice College use technology responsibly, ethically and respectfully of others. This policy has been drawn up to ensure that modern technologies are used appropriately.

## **2. Aim of Policy**

The aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that students will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school’s internet resources in a safe and effective manner. The policy applies to students of Edmund Rice College. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in Edmund Rice College. Internet use and access is considered a school resource. If the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

When using the internet students, staff and those associated with the school, including parents, 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

Misuse of the resource 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 inappropriate use of this resource to the appropriate authorities.

Edmund Rice College 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 Edmund Rice College may, where known, inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions. With respect to the school’s statutory obligations, it may also report behaviour to the necessary authorities.

### 3. Legislation

The school and this policy is guided by the following pieces of legislation which students, staff, school personnel and parents should familiarise themselves with;

- Data Protection Act 2018
- <http://www.dataprotection.ie/>
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1988/en/act/pub/0025/index.html>
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/2003/en/act/pub/0006/index.html>
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1998/en/act/pub/0022/index.html>
- Interception Act 1993
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1993/en/act/pub/0010/print.html>
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1989/en/act/pub/0022/index.html>

### 4. Education

Edmund Rice College implements a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows on promoting safe use of the internet and understanding the implications of relevant legislation by:

- Ensuring students will be provided with information on the importance of internet safety and the appropriate use of the internet as part of their ICT class in first-year;
- Addressing issues of online safety and appropriate use of technology as part of the students' SPHE curriculum;
- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher and those students who have access to laptops should also be monitored if connecting to the internet;
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems is used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material;
- Students accessing the internet via WiFi will have their usage monitored and those who access the internet in the computer room have their usage monitored;
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety;
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted; • Virus protection software is used;
- The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media, requires a teacher's permission;
- Downloading of data file are restricted;
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

## 5. Rules regarding Mobile Phones (including internet enabled devices)

- Students may bring their mobile phones to school but need to abide by the school's Code of Behaviour in respect to their use.
- Mobile phones or electronic devices should never be brought into an exam as the SEC does not permit them in State Exams. If there is an issue with the use of a mobile phone/electronic device during an exam, the rules that govern such a breach with the SEC shall act as a guide for the school;
- Phones and devices should not be used in any way between classes, before classes, etc. Phones may only be used once classes/study/extracurricular activities have finished and students have left the school premises.
- If a student needs to contact home urgently, they will be allowed to use the phone in the school office. If parents need to contact children urgently, they should phone the school and the message will be relayed. Parents should not text students during the school day because if students are abiding by the rules they will not see the message until school is finished.
- In the event of a dispute about whether these rules have been breached, the phone shall be handed over immediately to the teacher who will give it to the principal or deputy principal so the matter can be investigated. Failure to hand over the phone immediately shall be considered a serious matter.
- At all times, the privacy of a student shall be respected. Where the data on a phone is accessed it shall only be to determine whether there has been misuse of the phone, not to monitor the private activities of the owner. However, students and parents need to be aware of the fact that a mobile phone has no filtering on it, thus allowing students to access sites that they will not be able to access using the school's internet.

### **If a phone has been used to take photographs/audio or video footage:**

- The student may be asked to hand over the phone if the school authorities think there may be an issue with the taking of images or audio;
- If the material (photographs/audio/video footage) has been taken with the consent of the subject(s) therein there shall be no further sanction;
- If the material has been taken without the consent of the subject(s), the student may face disciplinary action;
- If the material has been taken without the consent of the subject(s) and subsequently posted on the internet, shown to others or distributed in any manner, the student responsible needs to be aware that this may constitute a serious offence and may fall with the agreed definition of bullying as outlined in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Depending on the nature of the content viewed, the school reserves the right to contact relevant outside bodies (Gardaí, Tusla, etc.) to determine the appropriate course of action.

## 6. Infrastructure

- All those who log on to WiFi in the school, using school devices, are required to do so using a key;
- There are different passwords for staff and for student WiFi;
- School administrators will oversee the use/removal of various profiles in consultation with school management;

- Internet content, accessed by using the school's devices or by logging on to the school WiFi is filtered for all in the school;
- Student's 'direct' internet contact is by way of: Desktops in the school's computer room / Chromebooks provided by class teachers / Laptops for students with special education needs
- There are WiFi and Wired Networks available in the school;
- All classrooms currently in use have wired network connections available;
- There are WiFi access points throughout the school, but there may be some areas where it proves difficult to connect to the WiFi;
- There is separate WiFi for staff and for students;
- Access to WiFi is only by means of logging in with your school email account, thus enabling the school to know who has logged in and to what sites;
- Restrictions are in place to prevent using another student's email account and students are advised to never share their email password;
- Students are not permitted to use any 'wired' network connections in a classroom unless supervised by a teacher.

## 7. Content Filtering

The school has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the NCTE Schools Broadband Network: **Level 4**

This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites categorised as personal, and other similar types of websites, such as blogs but blocks access to social networking sites. This level is also designed to block material of an illegal or pornographic nature. 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.

## 8. Web Browsing and Downloading

- Users will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials;
- Users will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher;
- Users will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to the deputy principal;
- Users will not copy information from the internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content;
- Users should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, is monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons;
- Users will use the school's internet connection only for educational and career development activities;
- Users will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users;

- Users will not download or view any material that is illegal, has copyright, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person;
- Users of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed. Any actions to circumvent filtering is deemed a serious breach of this AUP;
- Downloading by users of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.

## 9. Email and Messaging

- All users in Edmund Rice College are provided with school emails for the purposes of school work and to access Google Classroom;
- The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Edmund Rice College;
- Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other students;
- Users should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games;
- Users should be aware that email communications are monitored for malware and suspicious activity. The content of the emails is not monitored;
- Users will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, copyrighted, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person;
- Users should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet;
- Users should not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, mobile numbers, email addresses or pictures;
- Users 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;
- Users should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.

## 10. Social Media

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Edmund Rice College:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, G Chat etc. is not allowed in Edmund Rice College;
- Use of video streaming sites such as TikTok, YouTube and Vimeo etc. is allowed in Edmund Rice College, but strictly only for education purposes;
- Staff and students must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, staff, other members of Edmund Rice College;
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of Edmund Rice College on social media;
- 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 Edmund Rice College into disrepute;
- Staff and students must not represent your personal views as those of being the views of Edmund Rice College on any social medium.

## **11.Images & Video**

In relation to the taking of and sharing of images and video in Edmund Rice College;

- 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;
- At Edmund Rice College students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission;
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds by students or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances;
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or students of Edmund Rice College and the person taking them has the express permission of the principal or deputy principal;
- Students and 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;
- 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.

## **12.Cyberbullying and Social Media**

Edmund Rice College reserves the right to investigate and deal with incidents and activities that happen outside school time and which impact on the welfare or education of students of the school. This often applies in the case of misuse of social media sites which can lead to unfortunate online nastiness or cyberbullying. Students shall be advised that they need to think carefully about possible serious repercussions of anything they say on the internet as well as the hurt it can cause. The minute anything unpleasant is published online it can be viewed repeatedly and by multiple users and therefore formally constitutes bullying.

Circulating, publishing or distributing on the internet material associated with school activities, including, but not limited to, material in relation to staff and students, where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to the school or another person, is considered a serious breach of the school's Code of 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 pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

**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 cyber-bullying even when it happens outside of school hours. Measures are taken by Edmund Rice College to ensure that staff and students are aware that cyber-bullying forms part of bullying behaviour.**

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the Anti-Bullying Policy of our school.

### **Dealing with hurtful comments on the internet**

Hurtful or offensive comments about a person, posted on the internet, can be very difficult for a student and their parents. It is essential in such situations that the student and/or their parent contacts the school so that the matter can be addressed. Students and parents can sometimes feel that drawing attention to a cyber-bullying issue will exacerbate the problem, but our experience is that failing to deal with online nastiness means it will continue and most likely worsen.

The school can offer advice and counselling to students on dealing with upsetting material. There is also excellent advice on the internet. The website [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) is an internet safety initiative focused on raising awareness of online safety issues and good practice among students, their parents and teachers.

## **13.School website and social media accounts**

Edmund Rice College has a school website, a Facebook page and a Twitter account. The purpose of these, all administered by school staff, is to enable communication with parents/guardians and the wider community. Care is always taken to protect the identity of students, unless we have express permission from parents/guardians to identify students.

- Students will be given the opportunity 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/social media accounts.
- The website and social media accounts will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.
- Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Edmund Rice College will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website or social media accounts with parental permission.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Edmund Rice College web pages or on social media accounts.

**Ratified by ERC Board of Management on 15 May 2018**