



Springdale National School ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)

Formally Aligned with the Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent Bullying Behaviour

1. Introductory Statement

In Springdale NS we recognise that the Internet and digital media can help our pupils learn, create and communicate. The online world is very much part of their lives, they are “growing up digitally” with technology embedded in every aspect of their lives. Digital literacy skills are key life skills for children and young people today. They need to be media savvy and know how to effectively search for and evaluate online content; know how to protect personal information and reputation; know to respect copyright and intellectual property and know where to get help if problems arise. The Internet is a valuable teaching and learning tool. It can develop children’s independent research skills and promote lifelong learning. The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. The school’s policy is to look for opportunities across the curriculum to reinforce online safety messages.

2. Compliance and Rationale

This policy complements the school ethos of motivating and nurturing pupils in an environment where diversity is welcomed and celebrated and where all pupils feel secure and valued. Students are encouraged to broaden their experiences and to make the most of their many talents. Parents and teachers work together in striving to motivate and inspire all children to love learning and to maximise their development in all areas. The primary aim of this Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school’s internet resources in a safe and effective manner.

3. General Principles and Scope

- Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. If the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege may be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.
- When using the internet, pupils, parents and staff are expected to:
 - a) Treat others with respect at all times.
 - b) Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
 - c) Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
 - d) Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

- This Internet Acceptable Use Policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in Springdale National School.
- Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action in line with our school's Code of Behavior, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.
- The school reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- Springdale National School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff under this policy and associated Codes of Behaviour, and the *Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent Bullying Behaviour* (which formally supersedes and replaces the old Anti-Bullying and Anti-Cyber Bullying policies). In such cases, Springdale National School will, where known, inform parents/guardians.
- The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by school staff.

4. Content Filtering

- Springdale National School has chosen to implement Level 4 of 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.
- Pupils 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.

5. Web Browsing and Downloading

- Students will use the Internet in school for educational purposes only.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies, is a direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy and may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.
- Pupils will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in the classroom to their teacher without attracting the attention of other students. The teacher should report the incident to the principal.
- Pupils will be familiar with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Pupils 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.

6. Email, Messaging and Digital Communications

- Children are not allowed to access their own email accounts in school.
- Pupils should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other pupils.
- Pupils should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps and games.
- Pupils will use approved class email accounts only under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Pupils will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Pupils will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums that have been approved by the school.
- When conducting school business, staff will use school email addresses only.
- Personal or confidential data should not be included in email subject lines.
- Pupils 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. In line with the Bí Cineálta framework, pupils are encouraged to report these concerns immediately to a "trusted adult" in the school (such as their class teacher, support teacher, or special needs assistant). The trusted adult will, without delay, inform the designated staff members responsible for addressing bullying (the relevant class teacher, relevant special educational needs teacher, the principal or deputy principal).

7. Social Media and Online Conduct

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, G Chat, etc. is not permitted in Springdale National School.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.
- Staff and pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the Springdale National School community.
- Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Springdale National School community on social media.
- Staff and pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Springdale National School into disrepute.
- Staff and pupils must not represent their personal views as those of Springdale National School on any social media platform.

8. Personal Devices and Smart Devices (*not required for school use*)

- As per our guidance on the use of Mobile Phones & Smart Devices, we ask that children do not bring mobile phones to school with them unless it is essential. We also ask that they do not bring smart devices, including smart watches, that can be used to make calls, take photos, make audio/video recordings or send messages.
- Where it is essential for a child to have a mobile phone or smart device with them on a daily basis, parents/guardians will be asked to complete the relevant consent form through Aladdin Connect.
- All smart devices (including phones, smart watches, iPads, etc.) should be turned off on entering the school grounds.
- On entering the classroom, the smart device should be handed to the teacher to store in a safe, central location.
- All smart devices should not be turned on until pupils have exited the school grounds.

9. Images and Video Guidelines

- Care should be taken when taking photographs or video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
- Pupils 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.
- 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 pupils of Springdale National School.
- Written permission from parents or guardians will be obtained before photographs of pupils are published on the school website.
- Pupils 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 pupils and/or minors, is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other pupils automatically incurs suspension as a sanction and will be referred, as appropriate, to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.

10. Cyberbullying and Bullying Behaviour (to be read in conjunction with our Bí Cineálta policy)

- When using the internet, pupils, 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, including suspension and expulsion.
- In strict alignment with the Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent Bullying Behaviour, Springdale National School defines bullying (including cyberbullying) as: "targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of

people in society." This definition applies to online activities and cyberbullying even when they occur outside of school hours or off school grounds.

- Regarding isolated or once-off incidents, this policy adopts the Bí Cineálta standard: "One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour." Therefore, once-off online offensive or hurtful text messages, posts, or private messages will be formally investigated and addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy, rather than being excluded and dealt with solely under the general Code of Behaviour.
- To actively prevent cyberbullying, the school has integrated multi-layered educational strategies directly into its curriculum. These include:
 - Regular implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum to build social and emotional learning (SEL) skills.
 - Implementation of the Digital Literacy Plan to teach responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
 - Regular classroom conversations about developing respectful, kind, and positive relationships online.
 - Hosting an annual "Internet Safety Day" to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.
 - Conducting an annual school-wide "Cyber Safety Week" to emphasise digital safety, respect, and peer support.
- Reporting and Addressing Online Incidents: The school actively supports a "telling environment" built around the concept of a "trusted adult." Students who experience, witness, or are aware of cyberbullying are encouraged to report it to any trusted adult in the school. The trusted adult will reassure the student and, without delay, inform the designated staff members who have responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour: the relevant class teacher, relevant special educational needs teacher, the principal or deputy principal. All incidents will be investigated and recorded in compliance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

11. School Website and Online Publications

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish work on the school website.
- Digital photographs of individual pupils will not be published on the school website without parental consent.
- Pupils' personal information (name, address etc.) will be omitted from the school web pages.
- Pupils will continue to own copyright on any work published. The website will be checked regularly to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher and through the use of class blogs.

12. The Use of Artificial Intelligence (to be read in conjunction with our policy on the use of AI)

- Educational Integration and Support:

- Springdale NS recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.
- Springdale NS provides training and professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively use AI tools in their teaching practices, ensuring they stay up to date with technological advancements.
- The selection of AI tools and technologies in Springdale NS aligns with educational goals, including supporting learner agency and promoting critical thinking.
- AI technologies are integrated into the curriculum to enhance learner outcomes and experiences.
- Springdale NS will make necessary adjustments to our school's adoption and integration of AI based on review and feedback.
- A regular review of the impact of AI on learning outcomes will be conducted to ensure continuous improvement.
- Ethical Use and Data protection
 - School staff and pupils receive training on the ethical use of AI technologies, including understanding data privacy, identifying biases, and verifying AI-generated information.
 - All AI tools authorised for use in Springdale NS comply with data protection regulations (GDPR). As a 'Google school' staff will use AI tools such as Google Gemini and Gemini Notebook.
 - Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.
 - Pupils will not create, share or send any AI generated material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
 - Staff and pupils must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the Springdale NS community.
 - Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring Springdale NS into disrepute.
- Promotion of Digital Literacy and Critical Thinking
 - Springdale NS promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help pupils understand AI, its implications, and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information, and recognising potential biases in AI tools.
- Pupil use of AI:
 - It is important to be aware that Generative AI tools that require an account to be created have minimum age requirements. These can range from 13, 16 and up to 18 years old. Many commonly used Generative AI tools also require parental consent for under 18s to set up an account, for example ChatGPT. It is essential to check the age restrictions and parental consent requirements with the relevant platform and be aware that this information is often subject to change. [The AI in Schools Hub](#) will provide access to an up-to-date list of age restrictions to the main AI tools.
 - Pupil use of AI tools, where appropriate, will always be supervised by a teacher and limited to approved educational purposes.
 - To avoid unsupervised use of AI in school, the KIDDLE search engine will be used when conducting research during class time.
 - AI generated material is not allowed for project work or homework.

13. Relevant Legislation

The school provides information on the following legislation relating to the use of the Internet, which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection Act 1988 & Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception of Communications Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Department of Education's Guidance for Artificial Intelligence in Schools 2025

14. Ratification, Communication, Implementation and Review

The plan will be implemented by all staff and supported by the Board of Management, effective from October 2026.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed formally in alignment with the annual review requirements of the Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent Bullying Behaviour.

Signed:  Date: 20th October 2026
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed:  Date: 20th October 2026
(Principal)