



## **Portmarnock Community School**

### **ICT and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy**

**Date Policy Updated: May 2025**

**Date Ratified by Board of Management: 10 June 2025**

**Date of Next Review: May 2026**

## **Introduction**

Portmarnock Community School recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our students enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life. To that end, Portmarnock Community School provides access to ICT for student use.

This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our students are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices on the Portmarnock Community School campus or at Portmarnock Community School organised activities of whatever nature.

The school reserves the right to intervene in incidents of digital or cyber bullying that occur outside school hours and off school premises where such behaviour impacts on the wellbeing of students or the good order of the school.

## **Technologies Covered**

Portmarnock Community School may provide students with Internet access, desktop computers, digital imaging equipment, laptop or tablet devices, video-conferencing capabilities, virtual learning environments, online collaboration capabilities, online discussion forums, email and more.

Google Workspace is the chosen learning and communication platform of Portmarnock Community School.

As new technologies emerge, Portmarnock Community School may provide access to them also. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all online technologies used in the school, not just those specifically mentioned.

## **Portmarnock Community School ICT Network**

Portmarnock Community School computer network is intended for educational purposes. All activity over the network may be monitored and retained.

Access to online content via the network is restricted in accordance with our policies and those of the Department of Education through its agency, the National Centre for Technology in Education.

- Students are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a student believes it shouldn't be, the student can ask their teacher to submit the site for review. This is done via the Oide Technology filtering service BrightCloud.
- Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline. These rules are found in the Portmarnock Community School's Code of Behaviour.
- Misuse of school resources may result in disciplinary action.
- We make a reasonable effort to ensure students' safety and security online, but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of school technologies.
- Students are expected to alert their teacher immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

### **Portmarnock Community School Email and Online Learning**

Portmarnock Community School provides students with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication. Availability and use is restricted and subject to school policies. Email accounts should be used with care. Email usage may be monitored and archived by the Network Administrator and/or Principal and Senior Leadership Team.

Portmarnock Community School recognises that online collaboration is often essential to education and may provide students with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among students for learning purposes.

### **Portmarnock Community School Devices**

Portmarnock Community School may provide students with mobile devices, digital recorders or other devices to promote learning both inside and outside of the school. Students should abide by the Acceptable Use policies, when using school devices off the school network, as on the school network.

Students are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to their teacher immediately. Students may be financially accountable for any damage resulting from negligence or misuse. Use of school-issued mobile devices will be monitored.

### **Access to Assistive Technology**

Students may use personally-owned devices (e.g. laptops, tablets-computers) for educational purposes if their use of these devices has been explicitly recommended as essential to the student's needs.

Appropriate online behaviour and adherence to the Acceptable Use Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy should always apply.

### **Portmarnock Community School Security**

Students are expected to take reasonable safeguards against the transmission of security threats over the school network. This includes not opening or distributing infected files or programmes and not opening files or programmes of unknown or untrusted origin.

Students must not share their password with another student.

Use common sense if you think a website does not look right. Inform your teacher. Think twice before you click on anything you feel is not right.

If you believe a computer or mobile device you are using might be compromised please alert your teacher.

Do not attempt to download any programmes or apps to school devices. Students should not download or attempt to download or run .exe programmes over the school network or onto school resources.

For the security of our network, download such files only from reputable sites and only for educational purposes.

### **Netiquette**

Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behaviour over computer networks and in particular in the online environment. To this end:

- Students should always use the internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Students should not share passwords with other students or allow access of their school account to a fellow student.
- Students should ensure that they have signed out/logged off fully when they have completed their task.
- Students should also recognise that among the valuable content online is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.
- Students should use trusted sources when conducting research via the Internet.

- Students should protect their Digital Footprint: not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleagues or employers to see. Once something is online, it is 'out there' - and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways you never intended.
- Students and staff should only communicate using school email addresses and for school related communication.
- Use email thoughtfully: Please direct messages only to those who need them, avoid 'Reply All' unless necessary, and respect recipients' time and privacy.
- E-mail communication should be restricted to normal school hours; staff and students should not receive or be expected to respond to email communication at an unreasonable hour
- More detailed examples of acceptable use and unacceptable use are given in Appendices I and II.

### **Plagiarism**

- Students should not attempt to pass off others' work as their own.
- Students should not plagiarise content (copy or use as your own without citing the original creator), including words or images, from the Internet.
- Students should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.
- The school may check for plagiarism using online tools as are available for such purposes.
- The school will encourage students who create original content to claim ownership of it using a Creative Commons licence.

### **Artificial Intelligence (A.I.)**

- A.I. is the ability of systems or computers to do things that would normally require human intelligence. Generative A.I. goes further in that it understands information and instructions to generate new information. For the purposes of this policy when we refer to A.I., we include generative A.I.
- No personal information should be inputted into any A.I. tool, under GDPR guidelines.
- Students should be aware that any information inputted into an A.I. tool is saved, incorporated into that tool and can therefore be accessed and used by other users.
- Students should be aware of the limitations of use of A.I. and be able to evaluate any information generated by such sources robustly.

- Students should be aware that not all A.I. tools are created equal. Research should be implemented with regards to which A.I. tools are the most appropriate to use in a given situation.
- Unacknowledged or unreferenced use of A.I. in the completion of a task will be judged as intellectually dishonest.
- A.I. should not be used to circumvent learning or assessment opportunities.
- Students should not attempt to pass off work generated by A.I. as their own.
- Use of A.I. should be referenced appropriately with regards to any copyright requirements.
- Students should seek guidance and adhere to any instructions given by teachers around A.I. usage.

### **Personal Safety**

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes you concerned for your personal safety or the safety of someone else, bring it to the immediate attention of:

- A teacher if you are at school.
- A parent/ guardian if you are at home.
- Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including photos, phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers and birth dates over the Internet without adult permission.
- Students should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission.
- Seek the advice of the Gardaí in any situation where you have received or been the target of sharing of explicit material whether that material is 'real' or has been altered in any way.
- The sharing of explicit material e.g. images, videos etc is a serious breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy. Such behaviour could lead to a Child Protection concern relating to the perpetrator and/or the subject of the material.

### **Online Bullying/ Cyber Bullying**

- Engaging in any online activity intended to cause physical or emotional harm to another person will result in serious disciplinary consequences, including the loss of digital privileges.
- Misuse of technology to engage in harassment, flaming, denigration, impersonation, outing, tricking, exclusion, and cyberstalking are all considered forms of cyberbullying. These and any other unacceptable behaviours are strictly prohibited.

- Such behaviours—whether on school devices or personal accounts—will not be tolerated.
- Do not use email, messaging, or online platforms to scare, harm, or intimidate others.
- In some cases, cyberbullying may constitute a criminal offence.
- All online activity on school systems is monitored and logged. Portmarnock Community School supports students, staff, and parents in responding to cyberbullying.
- The school reserves the right to intervene in incidents of digital or cyber bullying that occur outside school hours and off school premises where such behaviour impacts on the wellbeing of students or the good order of the school.
- *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2023)*
- *Children First (2017)*
- *Cineáltas Anti-Bullying Guidelines (2025)*

The school will act in accordance with the requirements of the Board of Management and statutory bodies including the Department of Education, Department of Justice, and HSE.

### **Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy**

Violations of this policy in Portmarnock Community School may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

Suspension of network and computer privileges, notification to parents/guardians and also may include;

- Detention.
- Suspension from school and/or school-related activities.
- Expulsion.
- Legal action and/or prosecution.

### **Appendix I: Examples of Acceptable Use:**

I will:

- Use school technologies for school-related activities and research.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow offline.

- Treat school resources carefully, and alert teachers if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- Alert a teacher if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (e.g. images, messages, and postings) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits only.
- Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research; ensure there is no copyright infringement.
- Recognise that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Upload any data I need to save into the cloud and make sure to transfer it to my private storage, as school devices are wiped regularly and Google Suite access is deleted when I leave school.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgement when using school technologies.

## **Appendix II: Examples of Unacceptable Use**

I will not:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others.
- Search inappropriate images or content.
- Engage in cyber-bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
- Try to find ways to circumvent the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
- Plagiarise content (copy, use as their own, without citing the original creator including AI sources) I find online.
- Post personally identifying information, about myself or others.
- Agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
- Attempt to access sites, servers, accounts, or content that isn't intended for my use.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgement when using school technologies.
- Please note that "ICT and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy" is published using a Creative Commons Licence (details below). Note also that it is an evolving document that will change over time.



Acceptance of the Portmarnock Community School ICT and Social Media  
Acceptable Use Policy

I have **read and understood** this Acceptable Use Policy and agree to abide by it:

(Student's Name)

(Student's Signature)

(Date)

I have **read and discussed** this Acceptable Use Policy with my child:

(Parent/ Guardian's Name)

(Parent/ Guardian's Signature)

(Date)