



Acceptable Use Policy

Aim

The aim of our Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that all members of the school community will benefit from the educational opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe, responsible and effective manner.

Use of Digital Technology

Digital technology and access to the internet are essential elements of, and necessary tools for education and enable access to the curriculum. Internet access and digital technology is used to raise educational standards, to promote pupil achievement, to support the professional work of staff and to enhance the school's management, information and business administration systems.

This policy applies to staff, pupils, parents, volunteers and others who access the internet and technology in connection with Powerscourt N.S.

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school A.U.P. is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and may result in disciplinary action in line with the school Code of Behaviour. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal or Child Safeguarding concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Cyberbullying and Good 'Netiquette'

When using the internet and technology, pupils, parents, staff and volunteers are expected to treat others with respect at all times. Awareness of cyber bullying is an integral part of our access to the internet and the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

All members of the school community are asked to promote good 'netiquette' and ensure that online use, messages / comments are always appropriate, safe, respectful and kind and in line with school policies.

Staff, pupils and parents and members of the school community must not use the internet, social media, communication tools or technology in any way to:

- harm, harass, insult, abuse, make negative comments about or embarrass or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the school community.
- discuss personal information about pupils, staff, parents or other members of the school community.
- engage in activities which might bring Powerscourt National School or its community into disrepute.
- represent your personal views as those of Powerscourt National School or its community.
- upload or publish photographs of the school, pupils, parents or staff to the internet without prior permission of those involved.

The Board of Management/The Principal should be consulted before any accounts or online presences in the name of Powerscourt National School are created. This includes Facebook groups and any forums for parents of children in the school.

School's Strategy

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet, as much as is possible. These strategies are as follows:

General

- iPad sessions will always be guided and monitored by a teacher / staff member.
- Internet use within the school may be monitored through observation and through the school network.
- Pupils from 1st Class onwards are taught the Webwise Programme (an internet safety initiative focused on raising awareness of online safety issues and good practice) during September each year.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted.
- Virus protection software is used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal storage devices such as memory sticks, external hard drives, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media by pupils, requires a teacher's permission.
- Pupils will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Pupils will treat school equipment with due care and will not alter equipment settings unless instructed to do so.
- Use of the school's internet and technology use by pupils and staff will be monitored.

Web Browsing / Downloading / Uploading / File Sharing

- Pupils should not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Pupils should use the internet for educational purposes and / or as deemed fit by a teacher.
- Pupils should inform their teacher if they inadvertently access information that makes them uncomfortable. In the event of this happening, the children will be reassured and their parents / guardians will be notified.
- Pupils will be advised never to disclose or publicise personal information.
- Pupils may only download materials or images that are relevant to their studies and in line with teacher guidance.
- Pupils will be taught not to copy information from the internet without acknowledging the creator and referencing the source of the content.
- Any activity/usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

Email / Online Communications

- Pupils are not permitted to use personal email accounts in school.
- Pupils are not permitted to send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

- 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.
- Pupils are not permitted to reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as passwords, addresses, telephone numbers or pictures.
- Pupils should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails, online communications or the internet.
- Access to video calls, chat rooms, discussion forums, social media, blogging or instant messaging is only permitted when approved by the school, and used for educational purposes. Access to these will be supervised.

School Website / ClassDojo

- Pupils' work may be shared on the invitation-only school blog – ClassDojo.
- The website / digital portfolios are monitored by staff, to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
- The publication of pupils' work online will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Consent from parents / guardians is sought at the start of the academic year regarding publication of photographs on different platforms e.g. ClassDojo, external publications such as newspapers etc.
- Online pages allowing comments or user-generated content will be moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Images, Videos and Recordings

- Care should be taken that in photographic or video images that pupils are appropriately dressed and not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute/danger.
- Pupils, parents, staff and volunteers must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images or recordings of others without their permission.
- Under no circumstances can pictures or recordings be taken of video calls.
- Pupils, parents, staff and volunteers 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 is an unacceptable and prohibited behaviour with serious and legal consequences. The Gardaí will always be contacted in such cases.

School Equipment (iPads / Laptops)

- Pupils may only use school equipment to record, as the teacher has instructed.
- Equipment may not be passed onto any other party without permission from the school.
- The equipment is at all times property of the school and it must be treated with due care and with all guidelines / instructions followed.

Personal Devices

- The use of personal mobile phones, smart devices, cameras and recording equipment etc. by pupils during school hours is forbidden (unless specific permission has been granted by the class teacher/principal).
- Where pupils have permission to use their own devices during lessons, they continue to be bound by the conditions laid out in this agreement.
- Pupils are not permitted to use any personal internet-enabled devices during social time while at school.
- Pupils found using such devices without permission will have them confiscated only to be returned to a parent / guardian.
- The school will not accept any responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged items of this nature.

Legislation

The school aims to follow legislation relating to use of the Internet. Teachers, pupils and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Children First 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies, or mistreatment of school resources may result in disciplinary action, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Safeguarding Statement. This may include written warnings, replacement of / contribution towards replacement of damaged equipment, withdrawal of access privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities or Child Safeguarding concerns, to the appropriate authorities.

Review and Communication

This policy will be available on the School Website at www.powerscourtns.ie (or a hard copy may be requested from the school office).

The Board of Management will revise the A.U.P. as the need arises. Parents and staff are requested to read the A.U.P.

Ratified by Board of Management

Chairperson: 

Date: 6th March 2024