

Holy Faith
Secondary School,
Clontarf

Internet Acceptable
Use Policy

March 2026

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General Approach

- This Acceptable Use Policy aims to ensure that students will benefit from the learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources safely and effectively. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline, and access, is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, agreed-upon sanctions will be imposed.
- It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP at least annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.
- When using the internet, students, parents, and staff are expected:
 - Always treat others with respect.
 - 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 several strategies to maximize learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet. These strategies are as follows:
 - Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
 - The use of personal external digital storage media in school requires school permission.
 - Virus protection software will be used and updated regularly.
 - Internet use within the school will always be supervised by a teacher.
- This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and use the internet at Holy Faith Secondary School.
 - It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers, and others who access the internet in Holy Faith Secondary School.
- 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.

- Holy Faith Secondary School will deal with incidents outside the school that impact the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases, Holy Faith Secondary School will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place outside of school and impose appropriate sanctions.
- Holy Faith Secondary School implements the following strategies for promoting safer use of the internet:
 - Pupils will be provided with education around internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.
 - Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities around internet safety.
 - Holy Faith Secondary School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer and more effective use of the internet.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders: **Board of Management, teaching staff, parents, and pupils.**
- This policy has been developed by a working group including the Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, students, parents/carers, and representatives of the Board of Management.
- The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:
 - Logs of reported incidents.
 - Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the Principal or Deputy Principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the school's Digital Team.

Internet Use

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful, or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will be encouraged to report accidental access to inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.

- Students will not copy information into assignments without permission or 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, defamatory, or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students' downloading 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.
- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

Email and Messaging

- **Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.**
- **The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Holy Faith Secondary School.**
 - Students will use approved school email accounts.
 - Students should not, under any circumstances, share their email account login details with other pupils.
 - Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
 - Students should be aware that email communications are monitored.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, pupils should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers, or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through email or the internet.
- Students will not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or "reply all" without the permission of the originator.
- Students must only use their school email for school-related activities and for registering for school-based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school-based work.
- Students should report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, 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 emails are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the school authorities.

Social media and messaging services for Staff and Students

- The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of your 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 and other staff and the reputation of the school are protected.
- This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example, Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites, and content-sharing sites. The internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.
- The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging, and video streaming services in Holy Faith Secondary School:
 - Use of instant messaging services and apps, including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc., is not allowed in Holy Faith Secondary School.
 - Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr, etc., is allowed in Holy Faith Secondary School with express permission from teaching staff.
 - Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, etc., is allowed with express permission from teaching staff.
- 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 discuss personal information about pupils, staff, and other members of the Holy Faith Secondary School community 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 that might bring Holy Faith Secondary School into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent their personal views as those of Holy Faith Secondary School on any social medium.
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.
- 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>

Personal Devices

- Students using their own technology in school (6th Year Students in 2026/27) should follow the rules set out in this agreement in the same way as if they were using school equipment.
- The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches in Holy Faith Secondary School:
 - Students are only allowed to bring personal internet-enabled devices into Holy Faith Secondary School with expressed permission from staff.
 - Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with expressed permission from teaching staff.
 - Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time while in school.

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

- The Holy Faith Secondary School digital learning platform is licensed to and managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.
- Students must only use their school email to access the school's digital learning platform.
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the school platform.
- The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).
- 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.

Images and Video

- 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 individual or the school into disrepute.
- At Holy Faith Secondary School, 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.
- Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained before photographs of students are published on the school's website.
- Students must not share images, videos, or other content online to harm another member of the school community, regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.
- Sharing explicit images of students and/or minors is unacceptable, a criminal offence and prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under child protection, obscenity, computer 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
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues, breach the integrity of the ethos of the school, or bring the school into disrepute
- Using school systems to run a private business
- Use 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 except as outlined in this policy
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

School Websites

- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that no content compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.
- Holy Faith Secondary School will use only digital photographs and audio or video clips of group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with the permission of their parents.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal student information, including home address and contact details, will not be published on Holy Faith Secondary School web pages.
- The Holy Faith Secondary School 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.

Cyberbullying

- In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Holy Faith Secondary School considers that posting a single harmful message/image/video online, which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others, can be seen as bullying behaviour.
- This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out using 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, cyberbullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyberbullying. 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 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.
- When using the internet, students, parents, and staff are expected to always treat others with respect.
- Engaging in online activities with the intention of harming, harassing, or embarrassing another student or member of staff is unacceptable and prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.
- Holy Faith Secondary School takes measures to ensure that staff and students are aware that bullying is defined 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.

- Preventing cyberbullying is an integral part of our school's anti-bullying policy.
- In accordance with the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, Holy Faith Secondary School considers that a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should address it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Artificial Intelligence

- Holy Faith Secondary School recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.
- Holy Faith Secondary School provides training and professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively utilise AI tools in their teaching practices, ensuring they stay up to date with technological advancements.
- The selection of AI tools and technologies at Holy Faith Secondary School aligns with the school's educational goals, including supporting learner agencies and promoting critical thinking.
- Holy Faith Secondary School 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 is conducted to ensure continuous improvement.
- School staff and learners receive training on the ethical use of AI technologies, including understanding data privacy, identifying biases, and verifying the accuracy of AI-generated information.
- Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.
- Learners will not create, share, or send any AI-generated material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Staff and learners must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame learners, their family members, staff, or other members of the Holy Faith Secondary School community.
- Staff and learners must not engage in activities involving AI-generated material that might bring Holy Faith Secondary School into disrepute.
- Holy Faith Secondary School promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help learners understand AI, its implications, and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information, and recognition of potential biases in AI tools.
- AI systems used in Holy Faith Secondary School ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.

- Learners must attribute AI-generated text and images properly when used in assignments or homework.
- AI-generated material is permitted for the purposes of research, brainstorming, and revising text.
- If used for research, learners must fact-check and verify information from other sources and references.

Legislation

- The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to the use of the internet, which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:
 - Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
 - 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

Support Structures

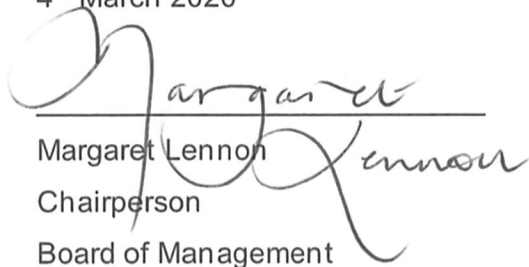
The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that address illegal material or the harmful use of the internet.

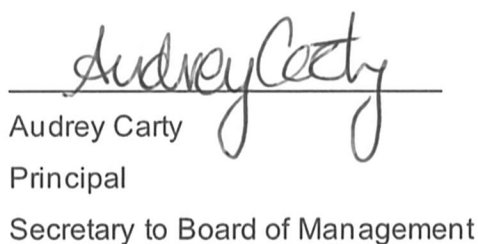
Sanctions

The misuse of the internet and digital technologies should be addressed in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy, and related sanctions for misuse should be outlined as appropriate. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:

4th March 2026


Margaret Lennon
Chairperson
Board of Management


Audrey Carty
Principal
Secretary to Board of Management