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Introduction

The Internet is an essential tool for education, business and social interaction. Internet use is a component of the revised Primary Curriculum.

In Ballinteer Educate Together National School, the Internet 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.

The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) addresses all rights, privileges, responsibilities and sanctions associated with access to and use of the Internet in Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

The AUP is revised regularly and as necessary by the In-School Management Team (ISM) taking into account any issues raised by parties affected by the AUP (including pupils, staff, Board of Management, parents/ guardians) and developments in ICT.

Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully by parents/guardians. Signing implies that the content is accepted and understood.

The AUP applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in Ballinteer Educate Together National School. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, carers and others who access the internet in Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, Ballinteer ETNS is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the pupils involved.

Aims

The aim of this AUP is to ensure that pupils benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline, and access to the internet is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. However, if the AUP is not adhered to, this access to the internet will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP - will be imposed.

The policy also addresses appropriate use of the internet and social media by staff. It also addresses how staff and parents/guardians can support pupils in their use of the internet and social media.

Scope of the Policy

It is important to note that the internet and social media are rapidly evolving, and while this policy provides a general framework, it may not cover every possible platform or scenario. All members of the school community are therefore expected to exercise good judgment and responsible behaviour when engaging with any form of online media.

Expectations

When using the internet pupils, parents/guardians and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times
- Not to undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute
- To respect the right to privacy of all members of the school community

Strategies

The school employs a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the internet. These strategies include:

General

- Internet sessions by pupils are always supervised
- Systems including filtering software are used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
- Pupils have access to their own password for pupil google accounts
- Pupils are educated in the area of internet safety
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted; this is monitored by staff throughout the school day
- Pupils observe good “netiquette” (i.e. etiquette on the internet) at all times and are not permitted to undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute
- The AUP is available on our website for parents / guardians to view
- Parents / guardians give, on their child’s registration form, permission for their child to use the internet in the school for educational purposes
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, such as USB keys or DVDs, requires permission and all external software must be scanned with antivirus software before use

Content Filtering

Ballinteer Educate Together National School has chosen to implement the following level of content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

- Level 6 -This is the widest level of content filtering available.
- Pupils attempting 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 and in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

Internet Use

Safe and Responsible Use

Pupils should immediately inform a teacher if they accidentally access content that is uncomfortable, inappropriate, or upsetting.

In such cases, the pupil will be reassured, their parent/guardian will be notified, and, where possible:

- The offending URL will be recorded
- It will be blacklisted
- The service provider will be informed

Monitoring and Security

All internet and digital platform usage, whether school-related or personal, may be monitored for:

- Unusual activity
- Security reasons
- Network performance and management

Permitted Use of the Internet

The internet must be used for educational purposes only.

Online activities that result in heavy network traffic (e.g., uploading/downloading large files) are not permitted if they impair service for others.

Pupils must not download or view:

- Illegal content
 - Obscene or defamatory material
 - Content meant to annoy or intimidate others
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to studies is a direct breach of the school's AUP.

Use of file sharing is strictly prohibited.

Privacy and Personal Information

Pupils must not disclose or publicise personal information such as:

- Home address
- Phone numbers
- Photos
- Passwords

Pupils must never arrange to meet someone in person whom they have only interacted with online.

Copyright and Plagiarism

Pupils and staff must understand and follow copyright laws:

- Do not copy content into assignments unless it meets fair use standards.
- Always acknowledge sources of online material.

Prohibited Sites

Pupils and staff (including contractors and visitors) must not access websites containing:

- Obscene material
- Illegal content
- Hate speech
- Other objectionable or inappropriate content

This applies at all times on school property

Internet Chat Rooms

- Pupils will not have access to chat rooms.
- Meetings with someone organised via Internet chat rooms and discussion forums is forbidden.

Email

The use of personal email accounts is not permitted at Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

Pupils will not have access to Gmail through their school Google accounts. This feature is disabled by the school's administrative settings.

Pupils must use their school-issued email accounts only for school-related activities. This includes:

- Logging into their Google accounts on school Chromebooks.
- Accessing Google Classroom at home.
- Registering for school-approved activities or platforms.

Pupils must not use their school email accounts to:

- Register for online services not approved by the school.
- Sign up for social networking sites, apps, or games.

Any email or communication that:

- Makes a pupil feel uncomfortable
- Is offensive, discriminatory, threatening, or bullying in nature

must be reported immediately to a parent / guardian, teacher, and the Principal. Pupils should not respond to such messages.

All emails and opinions expressed in them are the responsibility of the sender and do not represent the views of the school.

Any email sent from a school email address is considered equivalent to an official school letter and must be written accordingly.

Please note: All school email accounts are subject to monitoring. Emails may be accessed, deleted, or restricted by the school where necessary.

School Websites

- Pupils will retain full copyright ownership of any work they publish.
- The school website will be regularly reviewed to ensure that no content compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of pupils or staff.
- Ballinteer Educate Together National School will only use digital photographs, audio, or video clips that focus on group activities. Any content that highlights an individual pupil will be published only with parental / guardian permission.
- The publication of pupil work will be coordinated by a teacher and follow the school's guidelines.
- Personal information about pupils—such as home addresses or contact details—will not be published on any school web pages.
- The school will ensure that image files are appropriately named and will not use pupils' names.

Social Media

The internet offers a wide range of social media tools that allow individuals to communicate, collaborate, and stay connected. While these platforms provide valuable opportunities for interaction, this policy outlines the principles that all members of the school community are expected to follow when using social media.

Social media should be used responsibly and the confidentiality of pupils and staff, as well as the reputation of Ballinteer Educate Together National School, must be protected at all times.

To protect the wellbeing, privacy, and reputation of all individuals within the school community, the following guidelines must be observed when using social media, messaging services, or the internet:

- Social media, messaging apps, or the internet must not be used to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse, or defame others.
- Staff and pupils must not discuss or share personal information about other pupils, staff members, or anyone associated with Ballinteer Educate Together National

School on social media platforms.

- School email addresses must not be used to create or register personal social media accounts, or to communicate through personal social media platforms.
- Staff and pupils must not engage in any activity on social media that could damage the reputation of Ballinteer Educate Together National School.
- Personal opinions must not be presented as the official views of Ballinteer Educate Together National School on any social media platform.
- Pupils will receive appropriate guidance and education on responsible behaviour and etiquette for using social media.

Personal Devices

The following guidelines apply to the use of internet-enabled devices—including smartphones, tablets, gaming devices, and smartwatches—at Ballinteer Educate Together National School:

- Pupils are strongly discouraged from bringing mobile phones or smart devices to school.
- If a pupil does bring a mobile phone or smart device (including a smartwatch) to school, the device must be:
 - Switched off upon arrival.
 - Handed to the class teacher on arrival.
- The class teacher will store the device securely (e.g., in a desk drawer or filing cabinet) for the duration of the school day. Devices will be returned to pupils as they exit the school at home time.
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged phones or devices under any circumstances.
- Devices may not be used on school premises, school grounds, or during any off-site school activities, such as swimming lessons or sports events.

Digital Learning Platforms-Google Classroom, Seesaw, (including video conferencing)

Ballinteer Educate Together National School uses digital learning platforms such as Google Classroom and Seesaw to support teaching and learning. These platforms are managed by the school and are designed to enable secure, two-way communication between staff and pupils.

Usage Guidelines

- Pupils must use only their school email account to access digital learning platforms.
- Only school devices should be used to capture or store media related to school activities.
- All school-related media and data should be stored exclusively on the school's digital platforms.
- Use of digital platforms must comply with the school's Data Protection Policy .

Access and Security

- Each user will be provided with unique login credentials.
- Passwords must be kept secure and must not be shared with others.
- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained before a pupil is granted access to any school digital learning platform.

Images and Video

At Ballinteer Educate Together National School, the responsible use of images and video is essential to protect pupils' privacy, safety, and dignity.

Pupils

- Pupils must not take, use, share, publish, or distribute images or videos of others without their permission.
- Pupils must not share any media content online with the intention to cause harm, distress, or embarrassment to another member of the school community—whether this occurs inside or outside of school.
- Sharing explicit images, especially of other pupils or minors, is strictly prohibited and will result in serious disciplinary action, including suspension.

Parents/Guardians

- Photography and video recording by parents/guardians on school grounds or during school events is not permitted unless explicit permission has been granted by the

school.

- Written consent from parents/guardians will be obtained before any photograph or video of a pupil is published on the school website or used for other official purposes.

Staff

- Only school tablets or cameras should be used for school photography.
- Approved school photographs may be stored securely on school-managed Google accounts for future use (e.g., for yearbooks or internal displays).

General Media Conduct

- Care must be taken to ensure that no pupil is photographed or recorded in a way that could bring the individual or the school into disrepute.

Inappropriate Activities

The following activities are considered unacceptable and are strictly prohibited when using school digital systems, networks, devices, or online platforms. Engaging in any of the following may result in disciplinary action, including withdrawal of access privileges, suspension, or referral to relevant authorities:

Illegal or Harmful Behaviour

- Promoting or engaging in illegal activities, including those covered under child protection, obscenity, computer misuse, and fraud legislation.
- Accessing, creating, or sharing pornographic, racist, or discriminatory material.
- Promoting or inciting discrimination, racial or religious hatred, or violence.
- Sharing or engaging in content that promotes physical or mental harm, bullying, or threatening behaviour.
- Engaging in any activity that harms the school's ethos, offends staff or pupils, or brings the school into disrepute.

Misuse of Technology and Systems

- Using school systems to operate a private business or for personal commercial gain.
- Attempting to bypass internet filtering or security safeguards employed by the school.
- Uploading, downloading, or transmitting copyrighted materials or commercial software without proper licensing or permission.
- Publicly revealing or sharing confidential or sensitive information, including passwords, access codes, financial, or personal data.

Security and Network Misuse

- Creating or spreading computer viruses, malware, or other harmful programmes.
- Generating high-volume network traffic (such as excessive downloading/uploading) that may disrupt or slow down the school's internet access.
- Participating in online gambling or online gaming on school networks or devices.

Other Unacceptable Activities

- Any activity that is inappropriate, or in conflict with the values and policies of Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

Cyberbullying

In line with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta* guidelines, Ballinteer Educate Together National School recognises that bullying behaviour can occur online and through digital technologies. The school is committed to preventing and addressing all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying.

Definition

Cyberbullying is bullying that is carried out through the use of digital technologies such as:

- Text messaging
- Social media platforms

- Email
- Messaging apps
- Online games
- Chatrooms
- Other internet-enabled platforms

A once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image, or video posted online, which is highly likely to be shared or reposted, can be considered bullying behaviour. While many forms of bullying require repeated acts, online content can be rapidly shared and repeated indirectly, reaching wide audiences and causing lasting harm.

Examples of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may include:

- Sending inappropriate, hurtful, or threatening messages
- Sharing or posting images or videos meant to cause embarrassment or distress
- Posting discriminatory, racist, or homophobic comments online
- Spreading rumours or lies about a pupil or staff member online
- Impersonating others to send malicious content

Cyberbullying can occur at any time of day or night, and often extends beyond school grounds. A pupil's home may no longer be a safe space due to the reach of digital content. Even if incidents happen outside school hours, the impact is often felt in school, and the school has a duty to support affected pupils when this occurs.

School Response and Responsibilities

- Ballinteer Educate Together National School acknowledges its responsibility to act where cyberbullying impacts pupils or staff within the school environment, even if it originates outside of school hours.

- The school will respond in accordance with its *Bí Cineálta* policy and procedures when the impact of bullying behaviour is evident in school.
- Any form of online activity that seeks to harm, harass, intimidate, or embarrass another pupil or staff member is considered unacceptable and strictly prohibited, and will result in serious consequences and sanctions.

Education and Awareness

- The school educates pupils and staff on the nature and risks of cyberbullying.
- It is made clear that bullying, whether online or offline, may involve physical, social, or emotional harm.
- Preventing cyberbullying is an integral part of our school's wider anti-bullying strategy.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Ballinteer Educate Together National School recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in supporting teaching and learning. We are committed to the responsible and ethical use of AI tools within our educational environment.

- The selection and use of AI technologies at the school will align with our educational goals, including promoting learner agency and critical thinking skills.
- AI-generated material is strictly prohibited for use in assignments, homework, or any assessed schoolwork.
- Staff and pupils must not engage in any activities involving AI-generated content that could damage the reputation of Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

Legislation

Ballinteer Educate Together National School policy is informed by key legislation related to the use of the internet and digital technologies including:

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and the 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

Understanding these laws helps protect the rights and safety of everyone in our school community when using digital technologies.

Support Structures

Ballinteer Educate Together National School will provide pupils and parents/guardians with information about key support services and organisations that address issues related to illegal material or harmful use of the internet.

This ensures that our school community knows where to turn for help, advice, and guidance when faced with online concerns.

Sanctions

Misuse of the internet or breach of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will result in disciplinary action, in line with the school's **Positive Behaviour Policy**, **Bí Cineálta Policy**, and **Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment**.

Possible consequences include:

- Written warnings
- Notification to parents/guardians
- Withdrawal of access privileges
- Suspension or expulsion in serious cases

Please refer to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, Bí Cineálta policy, and Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment for full details.

Staff, student teachers, volunteers, and others who breach this policy may be subject to the **Board of Management's disciplinary procedures** and/or **child protection procedures**.

The school reserves the right to report any illegal activities to **An Garda Síochána**.

Related Documentation

Bí Cineálta Policy

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Data Protection Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Contact Details

Queries about this policy should be addressed to the Principal in the first instance:

The Principal

Ballinteer Educate Together National School

Parkvale, Balally,

DUBLIN 16

D16 N6T0

(01) 296 3017

info@ballinteeretns.ie

School Roll Number: 20400E

Policy Review

This policy was originally developed by a working group including Principal, Deputy Principal, in-school leadership team, teachers, pupils, parents/ guardians, and representatives of the Board of Management.

It was reviewed in 2025.

The school monitors the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents on Aladdin
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents / guardians, and teaching staff

This policy will be reviewed in xxxx

Signed:

_____ Chairperson

Appendix A Letter to Parents / Guardians

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well. As we embrace the opportunities that technology offers to enhance learning and communication at Ballinteer ETNS, it is essential

that we work together to ensure our pupils engage with the internet and digital tools responsibly and safely.

Please find attached our **Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** for Ballinteer ETNS. This policy has been carefully developed to reflect best practices, comply with relevant regulations, and foster a safe, respectful, and productive online environment for all members of our school community. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to indicate that the content is accepted and understood. This AUP applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in Ballinteer Educate Together National School. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents/ guardians, carers and others who access the internet in Ballinteer Educate Together National School.

It includes measures to ensure that pupils, staff, and the wider school community are equipped with the knowledge and tools to navigate the digital world confidently and ethically.

To support this effort, we kindly ask all parents/guardians to review the policy with their children and discuss its importance. We believe that this partnership between school and home is crucial in promoting good digital citizenship and ensuring the online safety of every pupil.

Next Steps:

1. Please read the attached Internet AUP carefully.
2. Discuss the key points of the policy with your child to ensure they understand their responsibilities.
3. Please complete the permission online.

If you have any questions or would like further clarification about the policy, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Thank you for your continued support.

Warm regards,

Ruth Brennan
Principal
Ballinteer Educate Together N.S
info@ballinteeretns.ie

The Board of Management of Ballinteer Educate Together National School, in consultation with staff, has developed the following code of practice for staff regarding social media, commercial practice, and marketing within the school grounds or involving the school. **These expectations are mandatory for all individuals working in the school, including staff, students on placement, volunteers, and outside providers.** A copy of this document will be provided to all personnel. Any questions or feedback on the guidelines should be directed to the Principal, as the day-to-day manager of the school, followed if necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management adopts the Teaching Council's "Guidance for registered teachers about the use of social media and electronic communication" as guidance for school staff in this area. All staff should read the guidance document, available here: [Guidance for registered teachers about the use of social media and electronic communication](#). When drafting this code of practice, the Board of Management has considered relevant sections of the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers, including standards 1.5, 2.2, 2.5, and 4.8.

Use of Film/Photography in the Classroom or School

Photographs may only be taken for the school newsletter or for use within the classroom. It is not permitted for substitute teachers to take photographs in the school.

The use of photography or video taken on school premises on personal, influencer, or business social media accounts requires prior written permission from the Board of Management.

Standardised or Diagnostic Assessments

Taking video or photographs of standardised or diagnostic tests and sharing them outside of the school in any manner is strictly prohibited.

Commercial Practice & Marketing in the Classroom or School

Any paid partnership between a member of school staff and a commercial business that requires any part of the agreement to be performed on school premises or with members of the school community requires prior written approval from the Board of Management. Payment includes financial payment or personal benefit in kind/gifted items. Any paid work should be carried out outside of school hours.

Promotion of Commercial Materials

Initiatives promoting commercial activities to schools, pupils, and parents/ guardians require prior written approval from the Principal. The Principal should consider the balance between the potential benefits of positive links with businesses and protecting children and their parents / guardians from inappropriate marketing when making decisions.

Example: A toothpaste brand offers free lessons and product samples, and requests that the lessons be taught in a class.

Use of Pupils' Work on Social Media

The use of pupils' work or recordings of pupils' work on any social media accounts requires the consent of the pupil and written consent from the parents / guardians and the Board of Management.

Use of School Identity on Personal Social Media

The use of the school name, or any identifying images, features, or descriptions on personal social media accounts requires prior written permission from the Board of Management.

When discussing social media in this document, examples include, but are not limited to, sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok.

Ratification

This policy was ratified on the date below. The policy will be distributed to all individuals involved in the consultation process of its development. It will be available electronically on the school website for access at any time. It will be reviewed as necessary but no later than 2028.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: Maeve McCarthy

Date: 28th August 2025

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Brennan'.

Ruth Brennan
Principal

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Maeve McCarthy'.

Maeve McCarthy
Chairperson