



# Ballyvary Central National School

## Acceptable Use Policy

# General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (A.U.P.) is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. 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 Therefore, if the school A.U.P. is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions - as outlined in the A.U.P. - will be imposed.

**The policy applies to the use of Internet and technology resources while on school premises and the use of any school resources that can be accessed outside of school. This policy also provides guidelines to parents on the safe use of technology in the home.**

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the A.U.P. regularly and update if deemed necessary. The School reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time entirely at its discretion.

**The A.U.P. should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the A.U.P. unless the school is specifically notified.**

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet and IT resources in Ballyvary Central National 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.

Ballyvary Central National School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases Ballyvary Central National School will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

**Board of Management, teaching staff, support staff, pupils and parents.**

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, students, parents/carers, and representatives of the Board of Management.

This policy was presented to the Board of Management in **February 2026**

This policy was presented to the Parents in **February 2026**

## Success Criteria

Our school's Acceptable Use Policy on ICT use will be deemed successful if the following criteria are achieved:

- Staff training has been provided on the use of the Internet.
- Computers are providing an additional resource for teaching and learning.
- Computers are regarded as an effective tool in preparation, planning and record keeping.
- Staff understand and use computer resources following training.
- Staff encourage equal student use of computer resources.
- Students experience the Internet as an enjoyable, safe medium.

The implementation of the Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by Annette Timothy, Teresa Walsh (ICT Co-Ordinator's), Carmel Heaney (Principal) and Vincent McHale (Chairperson Board of Management).

# The School's Strategy

Ballyvary Central NS employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies include, but are not limited to the following:

- The school uses G-Suite as a learning platform in third, fourth, fifth and sixth class.
  - Students and teachers will be given a G Suite Account for Education ending in @ballyvaryns.ie.
  - Student Accounts will be limited to educational apps such as Google Classroom, Google Docs and Slides.
  - Students will not have access to Gmail or hangouts as these apps would be difficult to monitor. All activity will be monitored continuously by staff and any student misusing their account in any way will have their G-suite account suspended.
  - The e-Learning Coordinator (Annette Timothy) will regularly monitor the usage of G-Suite by students and staff in all areas, in particular message and communication tools and publishing facilities.
  - Students/staff will be advised about acceptable conduct and use when using G-Suite.
  - Only members of the current student, parent/carers and staff community will have access to the School's G-Suite account
  - All users will be mindful of copyright issues and will only upload appropriate content.
  - When staff leave the school their account or rights to specific school areas will be disabled, deleted or transferred to their new establishment.
  - When students leave the school, their account and all associated data will remain active for one academic year. Following this period, the account and its contents will be permanently deleted.
  - Any concerns about content on G-Suite accounts may be recorded and dealt with in the following ways:
    - The user will be asked to remove any material deemed to be inappropriate or offensive.

- The material will be removed by the site administrator if the user does not comply.
  - Access to G-Suite for the user may be suspended.
  - The user will need to discuss the issues with the Principal before reinstatement. A student's parent/guardian may be informed.
- A filtering software from PDST is used on the school network to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material and to block unsuitable sites. This is regularly updated.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training by teachers in the area of digital technology.
- Online safety training will be provided to teachers and will be taught to all students.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software on school devices will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software is used on school devices and updated regularly.
- A teacher will always supervise Internet sessions which are conducted on school devices.
- Websites will be previewed / evaluated by a teacher using a filtering system, before being integrated into lessons conducted on school devices.
- It is important to note that the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025 should be read in conjunction with this Policy.
- Parents/Guardians and students should be aware that placing a once-off, offensive or hurtful internet message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

# Content Filtering

Ballyvary Central National School has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

**Split Level - This level allows different filtering levels for different ages / stages and different groups of users; staff / pupils / students etc.**

Students taking steps to bypass 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.

# Guidelines for Students

Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.

Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.

Students will not copy information into assignments and 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 engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.

Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Downloading by students, of 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.

Students will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.

**Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.**

# Guidelines for Parents

The safety of our children on the web is of utmost importance.

- If students need to use the internet for homework **or for distance learning**, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to supervise their work.
- Many social media sites have minimum age requirements. While the school will not monitor this, we would advise parents **to not allow their children to have personal accounts on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, X, etc. until they are the appropriate age.**
- Please do not “tag” photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school. If you are uploading a photograph, please ensure that it does not identify the child in any way.
- Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages written on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- Avoid any negative conversations about children, staff, or parents on social media accounts.
- Parents or students should not request to “friend” a member of staff in the school. The staff would like to keep their personal lives personal.
- Staff have the right to ignore requests on Facebook or other social network requests.
- Parents are always encouraged to review the online activities of your child. If at any time you have questions about our projects or our use of these tools, please contact your child’s teacher(s).

## Education

- Students will be educated on the benefits and risks associated with using the internet.
- The students of Ballyvary Central NS will be made aware of the importance of keeping their personal information private.
- The students will learn about the importance of informing and telling someone they trust if they feel unsafe or discover something unpleasant.



- The students will learn about the importance of treating ICT equipment with care, consideration, and respect.

## Student safety

The safety of our students is always our primary concern, so sites endorsed by Ballyvary Central NS for students' use have been carefully evaluated. The following protective measures are in place for our use of web-based tools.

- Students will be taught lessons in the area of Internet safety.
- Wherever possible, teachers will choose sites offering private groups for schools and classrooms.
- In cases where this is not possible, only the teacher will be registered with a whole-class account to be used by all students.
- Students will never be required to submit personal information
- Any student accounts will be created under strict protections and guidelines.
- Student activity will be closely monitored for appropriate use and conduct.
- All school conduct rules apply online as well as in class.
- Everything we make with the tool(s) is subject to teacher approval and / or deletion

## Email and Messaging

**Downloading by students, of materials or images not relevant to their studies is not allowed.**

**The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Ballyvary Central National School.**

Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school-based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school based work.

Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.

DRAFT

# 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 is 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 such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. 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 Ballyvary Central National School :

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed for pupils in Ballyvary Central National School.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is allowed in Ballyvary Central National School with express permission from teaching staff.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is 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 Ballyvary Central National 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 which might bring Ballyvary Central National School into disrepute.

Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of being Ballyvary Central National Schools views on any social medium.

Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

# Personal Devices

Students using their own technology in school 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 Ballyvary Central National School:

- Students may not use any personal device with recording or image taking capability while in school or on a school outing. Any such breach of the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) will be sanctioned accordingly. Any images or recordings taken by class teachers on smartphones or other personal devices must be downloaded onto the school server/cloud or on to the school affiliated website account and then immediately deleted from source.
- If necessary, some students may be permitted to bring personal internet-enabled devices into Ballyvary Central National School with expressed permission from staff.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time.

# Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

Ballyvary Central National School digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. This platform should enable two-way communication.

Students must only use their school email for accessing the school digital learning platform.

Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.

All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's 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.

Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

## **Remote Learning Policy:**

In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers may use Google Classroom & SeeSaw, or other platforms approved by the principal as platforms (the "Online Platforms") to assist with remote teaching where necessary.

- The school has signed up to the terms of service of the Online Platforms in use by the school.
- The school has enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these Online Platforms provide.

DRAFT

# Audio, images and video

Care should be taken when capturing audio, photographic or video images that learners are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.

At Ballyvary Central National School students must not record audio, take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.

Recording audio, 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 Ballyvary Central National School.

Recording audio, 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 video, audio or photographs of students are published on the school website.

Sharing explicit images/video and in particular explicit images/video of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images/video of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.



# Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- 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 or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings 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

- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

DRAFT

# School Websites

The school's website address is: [www.ballyvaryns.ie](http://www.ballyvaryns.ie) . The IT Coordinator and the Principal will review the content of the school website and X accounts regularly. The Principal, Staff and the Board of Management welcome any suggestions about how the content may be improved. If any parent/guardian has any concern about the appropriateness of the content of the website, then the Board asks that the matter be brought to the attention of the Principal as a matter of urgency. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Data Protection Policy. The following points should be noted:

The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested to ensure that online messages and/or comments to the school's website account are respectful. Any messages written on social media are treated in the same way as written messages to the school.

Students will be given the opportunity to have photos, projects, artwork and other work relating to curricular and extra-curricular school activities published on the school website as per the consent form. Teachers will coordinate the publication of this material. Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Ballyvary Central National School web pages.

The school will ensure that the image files are of groups of two students at least and are appropriately named. Individual photos will only be uploaded with Parental Consent.

Ballyvary Central National 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.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested not to 'tag' photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school.

DRAFT

# Cyberbullying

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Ballyvary Central National School considers that posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of 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 persons sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the students home may not even be a safe 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.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Ballyvary Central National School considers that a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

When using the internet; students, 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 student or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken by Ballyvary Central National School 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. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

The prevention of cyberbullying is an integral part of the Bí Cineálta / anti-bullying policy of our school.

In accordance with the Department of Education Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools; Ballyvary Central National 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 the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

# Artificial Intelligence

Ballyvary Central National School recognises the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and is committed to its responsible and ethical use within our learning environment.

Ballyvary Central National 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 in Ballyvary Central National School 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.

Ballyvary Central National School integrates AI into its educational processes to enhance learning, foster innovation, and promote the development of critical skills.

Ballyvary Central National School will make necessary adjustments to our schools adoption and integration of AI based on review and feedback.

School staff and learners 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 Ballyvary Central National School comply with data protection regulations (GDPR).

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, and defamatory or that is 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, other members of the Ballyvary Central National School community.

The creation, sharing or possession of AI-generated images that depict individuals in a sexualised or nude manner without consent is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a serious safeguarding matter.

Staff and learners must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring Ballyvary Central National School into disrepute.

Ballyvary Central National 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 recognising potential biases in AI tools.

AI systems used in Ballyvary Central National School ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes.

Learners must attribute AI text and images properly when used in assignments/homework.

Teachers will attribute AI text and images when used.

If used for research learners must factcheck, check other sources and reference sources.



# Legislation

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

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (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 deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

## Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies 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, including An Garda Síochána.

# Conclusion

This policy on acceptable computer use will be amended from time to time as required. Any member of staff who uses school computer resources is deemed to have made him/herself aware of these policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Vincent McHale, Chairperson Board of Management**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Carmel Heaney, Principal**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Annette Timothy & Teresa Walsh, ICT Co-Ordinators Ballyvary Central NS**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Permission Slip

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet and digital technologies. I will use the internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the procedures outlined in the policy.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian : \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety but the school cannot be held responsible if students access unsuitable websites.

In relation to the school website, I accept that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy relating to publishing students' work on the school website.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please review the attached school Internet Acceptable Use Policy, and sign and return this permission form to the Principal.

School Name: Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_