St Vincent's Castleknock College

Internet Safety - Acceptable Use Policy

1) Introductory Statement

This document sets out the policy of the school in respect of computer and internet acceptable use – the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). It also addresses school issues relating to the use of other electronic forms of communication.

2) Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all users of computer and internet facilities in St Vincent's Castleknock College – students, teachers, administrative staff, other members of school staff and visitors using the school facilities.

The Internet is considered an information source for students and staff. It is used as part of curriculum instruction, administration and research. The Local Area Network allows students and staff to communicate and share information within the school. These technology resources and facilities, both hardware and software, are the property of St Vincent's Castleknock College and should be used solely for legitimate and authorised instructional, administrative and public service purposes.

3) Relationship of this Policy to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The policy reflects the school's ethos. The Mission Statement of St Vincent's Castleknock College is set out as follows:

To have a College which is concerned with the development of the whole person in a Christian atmosphere Which encourages involvement in a balance of religious, intellectual, cultural and sporting activities and which promotes the growth of self-worth and respect for others in the spirit of St Vincent de Paul.

The philosophy of St Vincent de Paul (1581–1660), the Patron Saint of Christian charity, continues to inform and inspire the students, faculty, staff and extended community of St Vincent's Castleknock College. As a Vincentian college, it is committed to following Vincent de Paul's philosophy, which emphasises respect for the individual, service to the needy, human solidarity and adherence to the belief that self giving helps make the world a better place.

4) Rationale for this Policy

This policy is designed

- to comply with the requirements of the Education Act 1998 and the Educational (Welfare) Act 2000
- to conform to best practice as designated by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE)
- to provide a reference point for students, staff and parents
- to provide transparency and accountability
- to clarify procedure in implementing best practice.

5) Goals/Objectives of this Policy

- Protect and maintain the integrity of the facilities and make communications reliable.
- Support teaching and learning.
- Implement best practice in the appropriate use of the computer, the network and the Internet.
- Ensure that users engage only in the appropriate uses of meet the needs of staff and students.
- Provide for the professional development needs of staff.

6) Implementation Strategies

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet.

- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
- A laminated poster of the Rules for Students will be displayed in all computer rooms and close to computer workstations in the classrooms.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material in conjunction with PDST Broadband.
- Personal Websites, Blogs, Gaming and Social Networking sites such as Facebook are blocked as are all inappropriate websites.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not possible due to security systems and must not be attempted.
- The use of personal floppy disks, memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's permission.
- Using college printers for printing of inappropriate or offensive material is not permitted and will be considered a violation of this policy.

7) Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated over time.
- To approve the policy at a meeting of the Board.
- To consider reports from the Principal and relevant Post Holders on the implementation of the policy.

Headmaster, Deputy Principal and relevant Post Holders

- To oversee implementation of the policy.
- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the Acceptable Use Policy.
- To provide all staff - including teachers, resource teachers, supply staff, special needs assistants and administrative staff – as well as parents – with the school's Acceptable Use Policy and to explain its importance.
- To provide training for staff in the appropriate, ethical and responsible use of information technology.

- To ensure that users understand that failure to adhere to this Acceptable Use Policy will result in the loss of privilege and/or disciplinary action.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.

Teachers and Other Staff

- To accept the terms of the Acceptable Use Policy before using any internet resource in the school.
- To instruct students in the appropriate use of computer and internet resources.
- To monitor the use of computer and internet resources.
- To record any violations of the Acceptable Use Policy and inform the relevant authority
- To impose appropriate sanctions for violations of the Acceptable Use Policy, as outlined in the Parents Notification and Permission and in the school Code of Behaviour.

Students

- To sign an Acceptable Use Policy agreement which is legally binding.
- To agree to exhibit responsible behaviour in the use of all resources.
- Take personal responsibility for not accessing inappropriate material on the internet.
- To accept that St Vincent's Castleknock College is not responsible for materials, or information of any kind, found or acquired on the network.
- To accept that violation of this Acceptable Use Policy may result in access privileges being revoked and that appropriate school discipline and/or legal action may be taken at the discretion of St Vincent's Castleknock College.
- To accept that violation of the regulations in this policy may constitute grounds for legal action against the user, including, but not limited to, a criminal prosecution.

Parents

- To become familiar with the school's Acceptable Use Policy and to discuss it with their son.
- To sign the Parent Notification and Permission which allow students to use the computer and internet resources and to receive instruction in the appropriate use of these resources.
- To accept responsibility for supervision, if and when a student's use of e-mail and the internet is not in a school setting.

Parents are encouraged to support the school's Acceptable Use Policy. Parents have the right to withdraw their sons from use of the internet in the school. This should be done by contacting the Headmaster and the teacher(s) involved in facilitating its use. The school takes every reasonable precaution, through the strict operation of this policy, to provide for online safety, but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

8) Focused Areas of Concern

8.1. The Internet

- Students will use the internet for educational purposes only.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials to the teacher in charge.

- Students will be taught to understand the concept of plagiarism, to acknowledge the sources of information and to respect copyright when using Internet material in their own work. Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source, as to do so would be a copyright infringement.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored in order to safeguard the security of the systems in the school and the good name of the College.

8.2 Email

- Students are provided with a college email account under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- Access in school to pupils' external personal email accounts will not be permitted.
- When sending emails, messages should be polite and sensible. Emails sent to external organisations should be written carefully and authorised before sending.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not disclose personal information – such as home addresses telephone numbers or pictures – about themselves, other students, relations or teachers in emails.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Pupils may download email attachments only with the teacher's permission and will first run a virus check
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they know only through emails or the internet.
- The college reserves the right to block access to a student email account if in appropriate actions are being investigated.

8.3 Internet Chat

- Skype, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will be used for educational purposes only and will always be supervised.
- Students will have access to skype, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication only if they have been approved by the school.
- Private, pre-arranged, direct conferencing between the school and another school or suitable educational organisation will be permitted only under strict supervision.
- Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via internet chat is forbidden.
- Pupils will not be allowed access to public or unregulated chatrooms.

8.4 School Website

- The website of St Vincent's Castleknock College will reflect the school's ethos.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff. It will also be checked to see that no content denigrates an individual or might threaten the good name of the College and that the language and tone used is appropriate.
- Website using facilities such as guestbooks, noticeboards or weblogs will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details.
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will not be published on the school website without parental permission. Video clips may be password protected.

- The school website will avoid publishing the first name and last name of individuals in a photograph.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named – and will not use pupils' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

8.5 Personal Devices

- Students are responsible for their own technology within the school and on all school linked occasions. For example, leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending nuisance text messages or the unauthorized taking of still or moving images with a mobile phone camera, are all direct breaches of the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

8.6 Cyber-Bullying

- Cyber-bullying is defined as using social network sites, internet, email, etc to demean, humiliate, exclude, or otherwise undervalue another person through direct or indirect methods.
- Any incident involving a student, current or recent past, as perpetrator or victim, is of concern, but especially when both perpetrator and victim are students, current or recent past. Equally, social comment about a member of staff which falls under the categories listed above will not be tolerated.
- St Vincent's Castleknock draws a distinction between incidents which originate from within the school environs and those which occur outside. While the same standards apply at all times and in all places, it needs to be recognised that the College cannot be held responsible for students' actions when not on the premises.
- The College takes seriously the responsibility of regularly informing students about internet protocol and best practice in the area of internet usage, including the concept of "public domain". The College values parents' support in reinforcing best practice in this area."

9) Structures Supporting the Acceptable Use Policy

- This Acceptable Use Policy will help students benefit in a safe and effective manner from the IT facilities offered by the schools. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. If the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.
- 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 reserves the right to examine or delete any files, e-mail messages and their attachments that may be held on its computer system and to monitor any Internet sites visited. The Principal and/or Board of Management may view computer logs where misuse is detected.
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

10) <u>Ratification & Communication</u>

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) of St Vincent's Castleknock College has been ratified by the Board of Management. The AUP will be displayed prominently at appropriate positions in the school. It will be published on the school web site. A short summary of the AUP will be included in the yearly students' journal. Students and parents/guardians must sign the AUP permission form.

11) <u>Implementation Date</u>

This policy is in draft format to be ratified by the Board of Management at their next meeting in September 2018

12) <u>Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy</u>

Parents/guardians and all members of staff will be involved in monitoring the implementation of this policy. It will be included on agenda for teaching staff meetings at least once a year.

13) <u>Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy</u>

There will be an annual evaluation through random surveys, drawn up by any of the three education partners, to ascertain adherence to the Acceptable Use Policy in the school.

A full review of this Acceptable Use Policy will be undertaken every three years.