

Internet Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)

Educationalists believe in the benefits of curriculum-based internet use. The purpose of the Internet Acceptable Usage Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources, and will be protected from harmful and illegal use of the Internet.

Errew NS will employ a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Education
- Filtering/Monitoring

Pupil Access to the Internet

The school is pleased to offer the internet as an available resource to both pupils and teachers for reference purposes, researching project materials, playing interactive educational games, learning to touch-type and for lesson reinforcement and curricular exploration, as necessary. Access to online resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world, as well as provide staff with a means to engage meaningfully with children in the event of school closures in the future.

Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation for living and working in this information age. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum, and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources, as outlined in this policy. Pupils' use of telecommunications and electronic information will be taught throughout the classes and are permitted upon submission of permission and agreement forms by parents of pupils and pupils themselves.

1. Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher supervision
2. Internet will be used for educational purposes, research and reward as deemed by the child's teacher
3. Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher
4. Pupils will seek permission before entering any Internet site, unless previously approved by a teacher
5. Filtering software will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
6. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage
7. Pupils will receive training in the area of internet safety, digital citizenry and Google Classroom
8. Pupils will be taught to evaluate the content of internet sites
9. Teachers will be made aware of internet safety issues
10. Parents will be made aware of internet safety issues and will be directed to www.webwise.ie
11. Uploading and downloading of non-approved material is banned
12. The use of personal devices (including phones, games and storage devices) in school requires the class teacher's permission
13. Pupils will not be permitted to record staff or pupils
14. Pupils will observe digital citizenry and etiquette at all times and will not undertake any action that may bring their good name and the school into disrepute

Internet Chat

Students are not permitted to use internet chat rooms and social media while at school.

School Website

St Bridget's NS, Errew, Castlebar, Co Mayo F23 P903

094 9030615 | errewns.com | Roll No. 18503C

Pupils may create projects, artwork, writing or audio-visual recordings which would be suitable for publication on our school's website. Designated teachers will manage the publication of material on the school website adhering to the stipulations below.

1. Pictures of the children's faces will not be published unless prior permission is received – such as team photos. The school may use blurred images on occasion.
2. Pupils will be given an opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website and teachers will select what is to be published and decide on the appropriateness of such.
3. Permission to publish specific work will be sought from pupils/parents/guardians in the event the child may be identifiable – this would be work which traditionally may have been published in the newspaper and is a celebration of same.
4. The school is at all times respectful of the parents right to refuse permission for any of the above.
5. Permission may be sought to share images of children's work and their displays on the Community Facebook Group page.

Google Classroom and See Saw

The school has used Google Classroom and See Saw in the past and may undertake to use these platforms again.

Google Classroom may be used as a resource throughout various lessons. This gives the senior half of the school a digital 'classroom' space.

Staff can set assignments, assessments, quizzes and set audio files and video tutorials if relevant. The children can explore music, art and complete projects using pre-set websites for educational exploration.

The children use google accounts as a means of accessing various platforms for learning. The email service is switched-off when the children use these accounts.

The children in Junior Classes, First Class and Second Class and may use See Saw as a suitable method of communication and learning from home should the need arise.

Instagram

The school introduced this platform in January 2025. The aim is to help parents connect to their child's learning and celebrate progress and to highlight to the wider community the learning opportunities the children are provided with in Errew NS. Parents were given the option of opting in or out of the platform.

The school keeps all permission slips on file.

Education and Internet Awareness

Errew NS will undertake an education programme to educate children on the safe, responsible use of the Internet. Cyber-bullying has become a significant threat for pre-teens and teenagers. Through education and awareness, we aim to limit our children's susceptibility to it as they progress to secondary school. 21st century life presents dangers including violence, racism, homophobia and exploitation from which children and young people need to be protected. Children need to be made aware that negative written commentary online is damaging and may have consequences in the real world. At the same time, they need to learn to recognise and avoid these risks – to become internet wise.

Resources that may be used to implement this programme include:

- NCTE
 - Webwise.ie
 - Various other resources brought to our attention each year
 - Garda Community Officers – with thanks for their input in the past
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Filtering

The school will use the Internet provided and filtered by the NCTE (National Centre for Technology). 'Filtering' is a term used to describe a way of limiting the content of web pages, emails, chat rooms and other electronic data to which users may be exposed. No filter is 100% accurate. The most effective filtering tool is adult vigilance. At Errew NS, the BoM believe that the advantages to pupils having access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration far exceed the risk of disadvantages.

The access to websites from all school computers is monitored and regularly reviewed by the NCTE. Websites are only allowed through following a verification of their suitability.

Many browsers have their own built in filtering tool e.g. Google. Google's search engine has a built-in "Safe Search". This filter eliminates sites that contain pornography and explicit sexual content from search results. It is easily applied by clicking on the **Preferences** link on any Google page.

Laptops and Tablets, Chromebooks

The school now has a fleet of chromebooks – we can share these and they are sanitised as necessary by staff between uses, but currently, our small numbers means there is a machine per child in the school. This was made possible by the dedicated work of the Parent Association of the school.

In exceptional circumstances, machines have travelled home with children (lockdown etc). Use of laptops that travel between home and school are subject to all stipulations, procedures and sanctions outlined in this policy 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Parents of children who have been sanctioned laptops are instructed to be vigilant in monitoring their use in the home, as per procedures for school. Parents of all children are advised to keep laptops in a common area (i.e. kitchen or living room) with the screen visible to others while a child may be on the internet. The use of laptops by children in their bedrooms is not recommended. **We strongly recommend visiting the webwise.ie website for help in establishing safe internet practices at home.**

Sanctions

If a pupil deliberately misuses the internet or email, is found running searches on inappropriate topics or attempting to access inappropriate/unsuitable websites, this will result in disciplinary action, including the withdrawal of access privileges. Parents/guardians will receive notification of serious misuse by a pupil. Further misuse will result in longer withdrawal of access privileges, as seen fit by the school staff.

This policy was adopted/reviewed by the Board of Management on _____ September 2024 and is reviewed annually.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Responsible Internet Use - Pupil Undertaking

We use the School computers and Internet connection for learning. These rules will help us to be fair to others and keep everyone safe.

- I will ask permission before entering any website, unless my teacher has already approved that site
- I will not bring external storage devices such as pen drives (or memory sticks/USB keys and mobile phones or games etc) into school without permission
- I will not use email for personal reasons
- I will only use IT for school projects and with my teacher's permission
- The messages I send will be polite and sensible – I will not write anything I wouldn't wear on a t-shirt or tell my granny
- I will not use internet chat rooms
- If I see anything I am unhappy with, or if I receive a message I do not like, I will tell a teacher immediately – this is very important
- I know that the school may check my computer files and may monitor the sites I visit
- I understand that if I deliberately break these rules, I could be stopped from using the Internet and computers and my parents will be informed.

Signed: _____ Pupil(s)

Signed: _____ Parent/Guardian

Date: _____

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Internet Permission Form

Name of Pupil(s): _____

Class(es): _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the above child, I have read the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and grant permission for

(name(s): son/daughter) to access the Internet. I understand that school internet usage is for educational purposes only and that every reasonable precaution will be taken by the school to provide for online safety.

I accept my own responsibility for the education of my child(ren) on issues of Internet Responsibility and Safety.

I understand that having adhered to all the enclosed precautions the school cannot be held responsible if my child tries to access unsuitable material.

Signature: 1. _____ 2. _____

Parents/Legal Guardians

Date: _____

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School Website

I understand that, if the school considers it appropriate, my child's schoolwork may be chosen for inclusion on the school's website. I understand and accept the terms of the Acceptable Usage Policy in relation to publishing pupils' work and photographs of school activities on the website.

Signature: 1. _____ 2. _____

Parents/Legal Guardians

Date: _____
