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*St. Mary's Secondary School,  
Ballina,  
Co. Mayo.*

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Information Technologies Acceptable Use Policy**

As part of the school's education programme we offer pupils supervised access to the School's Computer Systems. This will allow students vast educational opportunities by helping them, for example, to locate material that meets their educational needs, communicate with subject experts and participate in school projects with students in similar circumstances or from different cultures. In addition to the educational aspects of this access, students will learn valuable skills for participation in the information age which may be useful for their chosen career.

The Internet is a global computer network which is not controlled by any organisation. This means that information may change, disappear, and be controversial or potentially harmful. Although the school actively seeks to promote safe use of the Internet, it recognises the possibility that students may accidentally or deliberately access objectionable material.

Usage of the School's Computer Systems and the Internet therefore requires responsibility on the part of the user and the school. These responsibilities are outlined in the school Acceptable Use Policy. For the reasons stated above, it is important that the enclosed policy is read carefully and signed by a parent or legal guardian.

We appreciate that parents and legal guardians are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the school supports and respects each family's right to decide whether or not to allow access to the Internet and e-Mail as defined by the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Yours sincerely,

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Robert O'Reilly (Principal).

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## INFORMATION AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL, BALLINA, CO. MAYO.

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In order to use the Information and Computer Technologies (ICT) equipment and local area network at St. Mary's Secondary School you must abide by the regulations set out in this document.

Within this document "the School's Computer Systems" means all or any of the computers in St. Mary's Secondary School whether connected to the network or stand alone or laptop and any equipment connected to the network or to those computers including all software and user's storage areas.

### School's Strategy

The school will employ a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

#### General

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal storage media in school requires a teacher's permission and must be scanned for viruses before use.
- Students will observe good "netiquette" (i.e., etiquette on the Internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

#### Personal Responsibility

As a user of the School's Computer Systems, I agree to act responsibly when using any of these systems.

I understand that I am **not** permitted to tamper with a computer system that does not belong to me. This includes trying to alter the settings of any network or computer system, 'hacking' into **any** system, copying programs in breach of copyright, or installing/running software or CD-ROMs for which the School does not have a licence. I realise that anyone misusing ICT facilities in the School may be suspended from using these systems and that in cases of serious or repeated misuse, a ban on all computer access will be imposed.

**I agree :-**

- not to tamper with any of the Computer Systems and not to install any software on these Systems,
- not to use another user's storage area or system password (if one is used),
- not to change another user's password,
- not to eat or drink in any of the rooms with ICT facilities and/or equipment in them.

I realise that I am responsible for the safe-keeping of my password (if one is used) and everything that happens on my computer whilst I am logged on, including any e-mail or Internet access.

I accept that if I lose or forget my password a charge of €5 will be imposed to reset my password.

I accept personal responsibility for reporting any misuse of the School's ICT to a member of staff.

**Sanctions**

I understand that violations of any of the rules mentioned in this document may result in a temporary or permanent ban from the School's Computer Systems and/or from online access.

- First Offence - warning and withdrawal of access to the School's Computer Systems for ten school days.
- Second offence - no access to the School's Computer Systems for a minimum of 20 school days.

Additional disciplinary action may also be taken in accordance with the School's existing Rules and Sanctions.

**Legislation**

The school advises that teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with the following legislation relating to use of the Internet:

- Child Trafficking and Pornography Bill 1997
- 1993 Interception Act
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- The Data Protection Act 1988

**Acceptable and Unacceptable Use****Acceptable Use**

Use of the School's Computer Systems must be in support of education and research in accordance with the educational goals and objectives of St. Mary's Secondary School.

Use of other networks or resources (Internet and e-mail) must comply with the rules appropriate to those networks or resources.

## Unacceptable Use

The School's Computer Systems may not be used for any of the following:

- a) the creation or transmission of any offensive, obscene or indecent images, text, data or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material,
- b) the creation or transmission of material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety,
- c) the creation or transmission of defamatory material,
- d) transmission of any material in violation of any Irish or other national laws: this includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by other laws,
- e) deliberate activities with any of the following characteristics:  
wasting staff effort or networked resources,  
corrupting or destroying other users' data,  
violating the privacy of other users' data,  
disrupting the work of other users,  
using the School's Computer Systems in a way that denies service to other users,  
other misuse of the School's computer Systems, such as the introduction of "viruses".

Use of the School's Computer Systems for private profit is not acceptable.

I understand that illegal activities of any kind are strictly forbidden.

## Generally Accepted Network Etiquette

I understand that I am expected to comply with the generally accepted rules of behaviour whilst using the School's Computer System, Intranet, e-mail and the Internet. These rules include, but are not limited to, those below.

- **Politeness** I agree not to send or encourage others to send any abusive messages. I understand that if I receive any messages, graphics or e-mail that upset me I should inform a member of staff immediately.
- **Chain letters** The creation/forwarding of chain letters is strictly forbidden.
- **Language** I understand that I am a representative of the School, using a system that can be viewed 'globally'. I agree not to swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
- **Privacy** I must not reveal any personal information, address or phone numbers of myself or others, or arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone.
- **Passwords** I must keep my password (if one is used) a secret and change it regularly.
- **Electronic Mail** I will use approved e-mail accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher. I understand that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. I understand that any illegal activities may be reported to the authorities. Sending and receiving e-mail attachments is subject to permission from a teacher.
- **Internet Chat** Chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
- **School Website** Photographs, audio or video clips of individual students or groups will only be published in school media in the context of school events or celebrations.

## **Services**

I understand that whilst School staff will endeavour to maintain all systems and back up data, the School makes no warranties of any kind whether expressed or implied, for the network services it is providing. The School will not be responsible for any damages suffered whilst using the School's Computer Systems. These damages may include loss of data, non-deliveries and mis-deliveries of data, service interruptions caused by any of the systems or any other damage caused by student errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained via the LAN and other systems is at the user's own risk. The School accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of information obtained through its electronic services. Whilst every effort will be made to keep the School systems virus free, the School accepts no responsibility for any virus transferred to a third party computer.

The School reserves the right for its staff to search users' storage areas from time to time to check information stored. Logs are kept both of e-mail and internet access in an effort to determine proper use of the School's Computer Systems. Users should not expect that files or messages stored on the School's computers systems will always be private.

I accept that once I cease to be a student of St. Mary's Secondary School, Ballina, my school e-mail account, network account and stored data will be deleted at the start of the school term following my departure.

## **Security**

I understand that any user who is identified as a security risk will be denied access to the School's Computer System. I realise that security is an important issue and if I identify a security problem I will tell a member of staff at once.

## **Vandalism**

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy any equipment or data of another user or any other networks that are connected to the system. This includes, but is not limited to, damage to the PC or its peripherals, (including the keyboard, mouse, mouse-mat and cabling), any of the School's printers or scanners, any other information technologies equipment or media.

The uploading or creation of computer viruses is a criminal offence; anyone introducing a computer virus to any of the School's Computer Systems will be dealt with severely and the appropriate authorities will be notified. I understand that any vandalism will result in the loss of computer services, disciplinary action and legal referral. I understand that **no** software may be brought from home and used on any of the School's Computer Systems.

<p><b>PLEASE KEEP THESE PAGES FOR FUTURE REFERENCE AND RETURN THE ACCEPTANCE FORM TO ST. MARYS SECONDARY SCHOOL.</b></p>
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INFORMATION AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES  
ACCEPTABLE USAGE POLICY.  
ST. MARY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL, BALLINA, CO. MAYO.

ACCEPTANCE FORM

Please complete and return this page to St. Mary's Secondary School.

**Signatures Required**

**Student**

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Information Technology resources in a safe and effective manner. Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – as outlined in the AUP – will be imposed.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or Legal Guardian**

This agreement must also have the signature of a parent or legal guardian who has read this agreement.

As the parent or legal guardian of the student named above, I have read this agreement and understand that access to the School's Computer Systems are designed for educational purposes. I understand that it is impossible for the School to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold the School responsible for any materials acquired from the network. I also agree to report any misuse of the information systems to the School.

I hereby give my permission to St. Mary's Secondary School to allow the above named student access to the School's Computer Systems and I certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

I agree to the above named student having supervised access to >

e-mail	YES	NO
Internet	YES	NO
<b>PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE</b>		

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian Name (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_