

# Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and Guidelines

## For the Use of Digital Technologies in Gort N.S.

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### Aim

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital technology resource 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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions as outlined in the Code of Behaviour will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. Before enrolling, the AUP should be read carefully by parents to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent accepts the terms of the AUP unless the school is specifically notified.

### School's Strategy

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

#### General

1. Pupils are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline – See Code of Behaviour Policy.
2. Filtering software from the NCTE (National Centre for Technology in Education) is used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. Gort N.S. has chosen to implement Level 5 on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network.
3. Pupils taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action.
4. The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage.
5. Pupils and teachers will be provided with training in the area of internet safety.
6. Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.

7. Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
8. The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital media in school requires a teacher's permission.
9. Netiquette (Etiquette on the Internet) will be taught to pupils (see role of Teacher section below for details).
10. Pupils will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
11. The Stay Safe programme, which includes sections on cyber bullying and internet safety, will be taught in school.
12. It is important that parents/guardians and pupils are aware of our Anti Bullying Policy (available for viewing on [www.gortns.ie](http://www.gortns.ie) in relation to social media. (see page 5)

## **World Wide Web**

1. Pupils will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
2. Pupils will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
3. Pupils will use the internet for educational purposes only during class time. If children are indoors during break time, teachers may use the internet to provide entertainment, e.g. watching a movie (G or U rating only).
4. Pupils will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
5. Pupils will be advised never to disclose or publicise personal information.
6. Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
7. Pupils 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.

## **Email/Seesaw/Zoom, etc.**

1. Pupils at primary level are under the digital age of consent and so are not permitted to have email addresses. All email correspondence will be between school and parent.
2. Pupils will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
3. Pupils will be advised not to reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
4. Pupils will be advised not to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
5. Pupils will be advised to not share their account details with other pupils.

## Social Media

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging, and video streaming services in Gort N.S.

1. Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Hangouts, etc. is not allowed in Gort N.S. by pupils on school premises.
2. Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is allowed at certain times in Gort N.S.
3. Staff and pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff and other members of the Gort N.S. community.
4. Staff and pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Gort N.S. community on social media.
5. Staff must not use account details associated with the school domain for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
6. Staff and pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Gort N.S. into disrepute.
7. Staff and pupils must not represent personal views as being from Gort N.S. on any social medium.
8. 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 Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, etc. until they are the appropriate age.
9. Parents and guardians are encouraged to regularly check their child's online activity/digital footprint. Parents are encouraged to check social media apps ( e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Viber, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok etc.) on mobile phones and electronic devices to ensure they are aware of their child's online interaction with others and approve of same.
10. We ask that parents, staff or pupils do not 'tag' photographs or any other content which would identify any children or staff in the school. If this occurs, you may be asked to remove it or delete it.
11. If staff are uploading a photograph to school accounts, i.e. Facebook, please ensure that it does not identify the child in any way. Please make sure photograph size is as small as possible (no bigger than 800 x 600 pixels).
12. 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.
13. Avoid any negative conversations about children, staff or parents on social media accounts. If this occurs, you may be asked to remove or delete conversations.
14. Please do not request to 'friend' a member of staff in the school. The staff would like to keep their personal lives personal. It may be awkward for a staff member to be asked to ignore a Facebook or other social network request.
15. Teachers will adhere to the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct and Social Media Guidelines.
16. Social Media Use in the event of a critical incident in Gort N.S. :
  - Teachers will include Social Media Literacy focusing on the positives and negatives of social media during a critical incident. Positive messages and appropriate advice for young people and their parents/guardians can be provided.

- Only posts approved by the Principal/Critical Incident Team will be posted on the school's social media. Social media can provide up to date information for all concerned throughout the various stages of the incident.
- Parents will need to discuss social media use with their children and monitor use more actively following a crisis.

## **School Website and Blogs**

1. Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the school website and blogs in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.
2. The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.
3. Website using facilities such as blogs, notice boards or wiki pages will be checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain personal details.
4. Please ensure that online messages and comments to the school are respectful. Any messages written on blogs are treated in the same way as written messages to the school. I
5. The publication of pupil work will be co-ordinated by a teacher and/or school secretary.
6. Pupils' work may appear in an educational context on other Web pages in accordance with policies and approved processes.
7. Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
8. The school website will avoid publishing both the first name and the last name of individuals in a photograph.
9. The school will ensure that the image file names or ALT tags (metadata that offer text description of web images for search engines and screen readers) if published on the web.
10. Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

## **Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices**

1. Usage of mobile phones/electronic devices must be in adherence to the Mobile Phone/Electronic Devices Policy.
2. The school acknowledges the usefulness and practicality of mobile phones/electronic devices and recognises their potential as an educational resource.
3. Many features on mobile phones/electronic devices such as Organiser (calendar, calculator, convertor etc.), Applications (voice recorder, stopwatch, image editor, video recording) or even Alarms are very useful and may be used by the teacher in an educational setting.
4. Pupils may not use personal mobile phones, smart phones or electronic devices on school grounds. Where a pupil brings a device to school they must switch it off, hand it to the teacher and receive it back at home time. The same applies for school trips.
5. Pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class is in direct breach of the school's AUP.
6. Pupils sending nuisance text messages is a direct breach of the school's AUP.
7. The unauthorised taking of images or recordings with a mobile phone, camera, smartwatch or electronic device, still or moving, is a direct breach of the school's AUP.

8. Please see Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy and Code of Behaviour for further information.

## **Cyberbullying**

1. When using the internet, pupils, parents and staff are expected to treat others with respect at all times.
2. The intention to harm, harass, or embarrass a pupil or member of staff in online activities is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.
3. Measures are taken to ensure that staff and pupils are aware that bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This definition includes cyberbullying even when it happens outside of school.
4. The prevention of cyber bullying is an integral part of the Anti Bullying Policy of our school.
5. It is important that parents/guardians and pupils are aware of our Anti Bullying Policy (available for viewing on [www.gortns.ie](http://www.gortns.ie)) in relation to social media:
  - 'Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a one-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour' (available for viewing on [www.gortns.ie](http://www.gortns.ie))
  - 'However, in the context of this policy, placing 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'.

## **Images and Video**

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

1. At Gort N.S., pupils must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
2. Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is allowed once permission is given by a teacher/staff member and care is taken that no harm is done to staff or pupils of Gort N.S.
3. Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained via enrolment form or Aladdin Connect before photographs of pupils are published on the school website.
4. Pupils must not share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.
5. Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of pupils and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

## **Role of Teacher in the use of digital technologies**

1. Explain our acceptable Use Policy and Netiquette (see below) clearly to their pupils.

- Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behaviour over computer networks and in particular in the online environment.
- Pupils should always use the internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner. Pupils should be polite, use correct language and not harass others or provoke fights online.
- Pupils should also recognise that among the valuable content online, there is unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content, e.g. The Pacific Northwest tree octopus.
- Pupils should use trusted sources when conducting research via the internet.
- Pupils should not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see, i.e. 'The Granny Rule'. Once something is online, it is out there – and sometimes can be shared and spread in ways you never intended.

2. Monitor their pupils' use of the internet.
3. Report any undesirable material found by pupils to the proper authorities.
4. Instruct their pupils how to react to unwanted messages/content.
5. Instruct pupils what to do should they unintentionally come across obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
6. Help their pupils to find educational material online.
7. Encourage their pupils to show respect for others when they are online.

### **Role of Pupil in the use of digital technologies**

1. Ask permission before using the internet at school, uploading or downloading information and using any storage device such as a USB key.
2. Follow Netiquette (see above).
3. Do not access other people's files.
4. Be aware of the conduct required when using the internet.
5. Do not share/send personal information with/to anyone whom they encounter online without teacher's permission.
6. Tell teachers about any upsetting or frightening material they find online.
7. Keep their passwords secret.
8. Treat others online the same way as they would like to be treated.

### **Remote Learning**

Due to the school closure as a result of COVID-19 in March 2020, Gort N.S. decided to engage with members of the school community using various online media including, but not limited to, Seesaw, Zoom, WebEx, Aladdin and email. Zoom is the current video call platform in use.

## **General protocols for online communication during remote learning in Gort N.S.**

1. Staff, families and pupils are expected to behave in an appropriate, safe, respectful and kind manner online.
2. It is the duty of parents/guardians to supervise children while they are working online and to ensure any content which they are submitting to their teacher is appropriate.
3. Staff members can communicate with pupils and their families via email, Aladdin or through an agreed established app (e.g. Seesaw, Class Dojo).
4. Any electronic forms of communication will be for educational purposes and to allow for communication with families.
5. Pupils and staff will communicate using tools which have been approved by the school and of which parents have been notified (e.g. Seesaw, Zoom, clasdojo).
6. Parental permission will be acquired before setting up a profile for a pupil on a communication forum and before video calls can take place.
7. For security reasons, passwords will be provided to families, where applicable.
8. Gort N.S. cannot accept responsibility for the security of online platforms, in the event that they are hacked.
9. Communication using a mobile phone will not be frequent, but in the rare exception where it is necessary, staff members will ensure that their caller ID is private.
10. Pictures or recordings of Zoom calls will not be taken unless necessity merits this and all parties, including the School Principal, have given explicit permission for this. **Teachers only** would have permission to record, and the school would retain responsibility for any such recordings.

## **Guidelines for staff members using online communication methods during remote learning:**

1. Staff members will communicate with pupils and families during the hours of 8.50 am. – 2.40 pm., where possible.
2. Staff members will have high expectations regarding pupil behaviour, with any communication which takes place online.
3. Staff members will seek to become more familiar with apps before using them with pupils.
4. Staff will check that consent has been given before setting up a pupil profile for an online app.
5. Staff members will report any concerns regarding online behaviour or interactions to school management.
6. Staff are encouraged to generate a new meeting ID and password for each video call meeting being held.
7. Staff members will notify parents/guardians of the date, time and password for a video call via email.
8. Staff members will only admit participants to video conferences if they recognise the email address/username as being connected to a pupil.
9. Ideally, staff members will always aim to have another staff member present on their video call.
10. Staff will communicate through a parent email address only.
11. See point 10 above (General protocols for online communication during remote learning in Gort N.S.) in relation to recordings.

## **Rules for pupils using online communication methods:**

### For submitting learning:

1. Submit work and pictures that are appropriate – have an adult take a look at your work before you send it.
2. Use kind and friendly words.

### For video calls:

1. Picture or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
2. Remember our school rules – they are still in place, even online.
3. Set up your device in a quiet space, with no distractions in the background.
4. Join the video with your microphone muted.
5. Raise your hand before speaking, just like you would do in class.
6. If you have the chance to talk, speak in your normal voice, using kind and friendly words.
7. Show respect by listening to others while they are speaking.
8. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately for the video call.
9. Be on time – set a reminder if it helps.
10. Enjoy! Don't forget to wave hello to everyone when you join.

## **Guidelines for parents and guardians:**

### For learning:

1. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supervised while they work online.
2. Check over the work which pupils send to their teacher, ensuring it is appropriate.
3. Continue to revise online safety measures with pupils.

### For video calls:

1. Pictures or recordings of the video call are not allowed.
2. Ensure that the school has the correct email address for inviting you to join apps and meetings.
3. The main purpose of a video call is to maintain a social connection between the school staff and pupils at this difficult time. Encourage pupils to listen and enjoy the experience.
4. Be aware that when participating in group video calls, you can be seen and heard unless you are muted and have disabled your camera.
5. Be aware that when participating enter a waiting room when the code for a video call has been entered. Please note that the school staff will only accept users into video call if you can be identified by the display name on your zoom account.
6. Please ensure that your child is on time for a scheduled video, or they may be locked out. Please request to join the video call approximately five minutes before the scheduled start time. This will give school staff time to verify your email address.
7. Make sure you familiarise your child with software in advance. For video in particular, show them how to mute/unmute and turn the camera on/off.
8. Participants in the call should be dressed appropriately.
9. An appropriate background/room should be chosen for the video call.



10. For detailed information on GDPR and Zoom, please visit <http://zoom.us/privacy>

## **Sanctions**

- Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour (available for viewing on [www.gortns.ie](http://www.gortns.ie))
- The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.
- Some of the breaches referenced in the document must be reported to the statutory authorities, i.e. An Garda Síochána, Data Protection Commission or TUSLA, under the current law and the school's Safeguarding Policy.

This is a working document. As we try out new ways of supporting remote learning, this document may be updated.

**Ratified by Board of Management on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2022**

**Signed** Paddy Grealish

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> of April 2022

**Chairperson, Board of Management**

## **References**

1. Previous Gort N.S. AUP
2. Webwise Primary Teachers Handbook  
<http://www.webwise.ie/WebwisePrimaryProgramme.shtm>
3. Webwise AUP generator
4. Professional Development Services for Teachers