

A photograph of Patrician Presentation Secondary School. The building is a two-story structure with a grey roof and light-colored walls. It has several windows with blue frames. In the foreground, there is a paved area with some greenery and a few people walking. The sky is blue with some light clouds. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

# **PATRICIAN PRESENTATION SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**WHERE CARE AND  
EDUCATION CONNECT...**



## Acceptable Use Policy 2023/2024

### General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, agreed sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP at least annually.

When using the internet in Patrician Presentation Secondary School (PPSS) students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

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

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in PPSS.

It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in PPSS.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

PPSS 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 PPSS will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions. When necessary, parents/carers will be directed to [webwise.ie](http://webwise.ie) and the wealth of information and support available there.



PPSS implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to pupils in PPSS through our Digital Learning Framework, SPHE and Anti-Bullying initiatives.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- PPSS participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders: Board of Management, teaching staff, and support staff.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents.
- Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited).
- Internal monitoring data for network activity.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal or deputy principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the principal, deputy principal and Digital Technology Postholder.

### **Content Filtering**

- PPSS Fethard has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:
  - Level 3: *This level is currently used by the vast majority of schools. It gives access to millions of websites including games but blocks 'YouTube' and websites that are categorized as Personal such as blogs and Social Networking such as Flickr and Facebook.*
- Students taking steps to by-pass 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.
- Staff devices, which are pin code protected, will have content filtering at level 6, which additionally allows access to Youtube and websites that are categorized as Social Networking such as Facebook.
- When using Google Classroom/Workspace apps, the agreed digital platforms for remote learning at home, pupils will be outside of the PPSSFethard network. Thus, it will be incumbent upon their parents and guardians to ensure adequate internet safety precautions are taken. In particular, we ask that parents exercise caution in allowing pupils to use social media accounts with minimum age requirements. We would advise parents not to allow their children to have personal accounts on TikTok, Snapchat etc. until they are the appropriate age.





## Internet Use

- 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 report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school but outside the classroom to their class teacher or an available staff member.
- Students will not copy and paste information into assignments. They will be taught how to acknowledge the source wherever possible. When assigning work through Google Workspace, originality reports will be enabled.
- 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 PPSS'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.

## Email and Messaging

- The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at PPSS.
- Students will use approved school email accounts for accessing Google Classroom. School email addresses will follow the following format: [first name][first initial of surname or first two/three initials if O'N or McG for example]@patricianfethard.ie e.g. [justinp@patricianfethard.ie](mailto:justinp@patricianfethard.ie) or [justinmcg@patricianfethard.ie](mailto:justinmcg@patricianfethard.ie) or [justinob@patricianfethard.ie](mailto:justinob@patricianfethard.ie)
- Pupils will be assigned a school email address in Sept of 1<sup>st</sup> year which they will use for any and all communications with the staff/school authorities.
- Pupils will not be able to use the email address assigned for email communication. This will be specifically disabled on the Admin Panel of Google Workspace. The admin is contactable through the school or at this email: [jmcgree@patricianfethard.ie](mailto:jmcgree@patricianfethard.ie).
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- 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.



## **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 the PPSS 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 Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias 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 PPSS:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in PPSS.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is not allowed in PPSS.
- 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 PPSS 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 PPSS into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent their own personal views as those of being PPSS on any social medium.
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.
- Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

## **Personal Devices and Assistive Technology**

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, phones, gaming devices, and smartwatches in PPSS.



- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with expressed permission from teaching staff.
- Personal internet-enabled devices are for the pupil's sole use and are not for sharing in the classroom.
- Smartwatches that can take photographs and record media are not permitted in the school.
- Children are encouraged not to bring personal electronic devices (including phones) to school during school hours unless there is a specific reason
- If a child, for whatever reason, brings a phone into school, it must be switched off and kept in their bag at all times.
- The school is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any personal electronic device on school premises

### **Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)**

In relation to Digital Learning Platforms, it is envisaged all that pupils will use Google Classroom. Staff will use Google Workspace to post work when students/staff are away from school where possible.

- Students must only use their school email for accessing school digital learning platforms
- Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media on the school's Google Drive
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the PPSS Google Drive.
- The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection policy
- Each staff 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 for pupils on school digital platforms.

### **Direct Communication using Internet.**

Teachers in the school may use any of a range of tools for classroom communication using the internet. Examples may include Padlet, Kahoot, and Class Dojo. Pupils are required to conduct their interactions and messages in the online space in the same way as they would be expected to in class or in relation to Google Workspace apps, the agreed digital platforms for online learning.

Digital facilities may be utilised to provide synchronous video opportunities whereby a staff member directly speaks to the children live, e.g. through a webinar or online meeting. The staff member shares any such invite with a pupil's parent or guardian, who is responsible for logging in to the meeting via their own account using a code. The following are ground rules for synchronous lessons online:

- All meetings will be password protected. As it is the responsibility of parents to receive the password/link, so too is it their responsibility not to share the password in order to protect the integrity of the meeting.
- All people involved in the meeting will conduct themselves in the same manner as would be expected in a regular class.
- The teacher, as the host of the meeting, has the right to eject any person from a synchronous engagement should they behave inappropriately.



- A parent is expected to be in the same room when a pupil is engaging in a meeting. They should ensure that all online interactions are appropriate.
- Staff members will not meet any child alone using an online meeting. If there is a need for a meeting between a child and a staff member, a parent must be present.

### **Images and Video**

Please refer to the separate policy for the Safe Use of Photographs and Videos Policy 2023 however the following general principles apply:

- Care should be taken when taking photographic or video images that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
- At PPSS students must not take, use, share, manipulate or publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is not allowed under any circumstances.
- 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 PPSS.
- 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 photographs of students are published on the school website.
- Students must not share or manipulate 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.
- Sharing explicit images and in particular explicit images of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

### **Access to School Devices**

Students have access to a range of IT devices at the school. To use a school PC, students will each use their unique login name and password (only) and, for access to Chromebooks, will sign in to their google school account through their school-provided email address and password. Staff may (only) access teacher PCs using the staff pin code assigned.

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

### **School Website**

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on fethardsecondaryschool.ie web pages or social media sites of PPSS.
- PPSS will avoid publishing names of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.
- PPSS will pixelate or obscure images of pupils that do not have permission to be featured on the school website
- 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.

### **Cyberbullying**

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, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the student's 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, PPSS 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 PPSS to ensure that staff and students 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 the school or at night. In addition, the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Procedures, 2013 defines cyberbullying as “placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

### **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 should be referred to in the school’s Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.



### **Monitoring the implementation of the policy**

- The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the Principal, staff and the Board of Management

### **Reviewing and evaluating the policy**

- o The policy will be reviewed and evaluated after 1 year. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines (e.g. from the Data Protection Commissioner, Department of Education and Skills or TUSLA), legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, students, school staff and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning

### **Timeframe for Review**

This policy will be reviewed in October 2025

### **Responsibility for Review**

- o ICT Postholders
- o School principal
- o BOM

### **Ratification:**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of PPSS at a meeting held on

Signed

Date:

Chairperson

Signed

Principal/Secretary to the BOM

Date:

Reviewed/Amended	Ratified by the Board of Management	Review date