Digital Citizenship Policy

Introduction

This policy is created for Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan as a Digital Citizenship Policy for use by staff and students in the school. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance on positive engagement with technology in our school for staff and students in the following areas; the use of the internet on school premises, school devices on and off site and school accounts, on and off site.

In line with our school's mission statement we aim to develop in students through the Catholic Ethos of the school a sense of stewardship, social responsibility and self that will stay with them beyond their years here to make them full participants in an ever changing world, in particular a world where technology encompasses all aspects of life at an increasing rate.

The use of ICT in schools provides students with the opportunity to acquire basic and essential ICT skills. For both students and staff, it allows access to additional learning and teaching resources, offers greater involvement in local partnership, community and interschool links, facilitating new learning experiences for all concerned.

For the purpose of this policy 'staff' refers to any adult employed by the school in any capacity. 'Students' refers to those who are enrolled at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan.

It is recommended that staff, students and parents familiarise themselves with this policy.

Objectives

- To build on the IT skills of students entering the school community.
- To facilitate and encourage the use of ICT in teaching and learning more effectively.
- To increase learning opportunities for students.
- To provide controlled and responsible access to the internet.

Internet Use

The school internet is provided through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). The internet provided to the school is subject to content filtering. The purpose of content filtering is to ensure (in so far as possible) that inappropriate websites and content are

not accessible from within schools. In this case, sites that are deemed inappropriate for educational purposes are blocked by the PDST and not at school level. However, the school may have additional sites that it feels are not of educational benefit and may not be used in school. Such sites will be specified to students in Computer Studies class in First Year. If students are unsure if a site is appropriate or not, they should direct this query to the Principal or the school's ICT co-ordinator(s).

The search and use of appropriate educational content is encouraged and supported for both staff and students. The internet, coupled with appropriate use, provides an abundance of educational resources beneficial to the education of students at Mercy Secondary School. Such resources are shared with students where staff feel they are helpful and suitable for students. Such resources may be shared in class or through student's Google Classroom accounts.

YouTube or similar sites may be used by staff, for educational purposes in the classroom or may be shared with students on their school Google accounts via email or Google Classroom. Where YouTube is used it will be solely for education purposes and students are reminded that inappropriate use of YouTube will result in a ban from computer access for a time commensurate with their actions.

When using the internet, all users must comply with all copyright, libel, fraud, discrimination and obscenity laws. All school staff are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with the rules of behaviour governing employees in the education sector.

Activities which are **not permitted** include;

- Searching, viewing and/or retrieving materials that are not related to the aims of the curriculum or future careers.
- Copying, saving and/or redistributing copyright protected material, without approval.
- Subscribing to any services or ordering any good and services, unless specifically approved by the school.
- Playing computer games or using interactive sites unless specifically assigned by the teacher.
- Intentionally transmitting security threats over the school network, including opening infected files or programs of unknown or untrusted origin.
- Unauthorised access to the school network on personal devices.
- Publishing, sharing or distributing any personal information about a user.
- Impersonating another user via user account or school Google account.
- Any activity which violates a school rule.

Activities which are **permitted** include;

- Use of school Google account for activities such as communication, storage, research and other educational activities.
- Use of the internet to investigate and research school subjects, cross-curricular themes, future careers and topics related to social and personal development.

Internet Etiquette

All students are responsible for their good behaviour on school devices, on and off the school premises. Students are expected to use the internet in an appropriate and respectful manner. In First Year, students are directed to this policy at the beginning of the year in Computer Studies class. Any change or update to this policy will supersede the previous policy. The policy is relevant from when a student begins their education at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan until the student completes their education at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan.

Cyberbullying is a new form of bullying. This form of bullying happens a lot on social media, online forums, text and email.

Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Abusive messages or slagging on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram etc.
- Offensive comments on videos or posts
- Spreading rumours online
- Hacking into online accounts
- Posting offensive images

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. No offensive language or content is to be sent via school email and correct email etiquette is to be followed at all times. Any student who is deemed to have acted in contravention of the policy will be disciplined in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy.

Computer Use

All students and staff have their own computer user account at Mercy Kilbeggan. This provides a safeguard against access to a computer or network by unauthorised third parties such as visitors or intruders. Individual computer accounts also ensure that any member of staff or students where relevant, can log on to any device in the school. Access levels for students and staff are controlled by the administrator. The administration team of the Principal, Deputy Principal and system administrator reserve the right to monitor and randomly select accounts to monitor, to ensure that accounts are being used appropriately and for school purposes only. This applies to school computer user accounts and school Google accounts, both of which have been provided by the school. Students must not use another student's user account or Google account under any circumstances.

It is best practice for both students and staff to lock their user account if they are away from their computer (Windows + L). This ensures that any sensitive information that may be contained on a computer or associated system or software is not accessible by a third party. It also ensures that no interference with a person's account occurs while they are away from their PC.

When a user is finished a session on a computer they must sign out before leaving the computer. Failure to do so can result in sensitive information being available to the next user of the computer or to a third party. Signing out of accounts is essential at both staff and student level. When signing out, users should first ensure that they have logged out of any open accounts, such as email, etc. and then follow the correct sign out procedure. This is demonstrated to students in their first computer class in First Year. Staff are reminded of the correct sign–out procedure at the beginning of the school year.

Both students and staff are asked to correctly shut down their computer via the correct shut-down procedure if they are the final user of the day. Teachers of any classroom with computers are asked to ensure that all computers are correctly shut-down at the end of the last class. This can be done via a control system in the main computer room, rooms with device trolleys and design and communication graphics classroom. All other computers must be manually shut-down. Teachers are asked to shut-down the teacher computer in the classroom at the end of last class where classroom desktops are present. This is to save power and to ensure that any essential updates that may be required can take place.

While using school devices, students should be supervised at all times. While using computers in the school, student accounts are monitored and their activities may be recorded if improper use is detected.

User accounts may, but not always, be retained for a period of one year after a student completes their education at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan. User accounts are permanently deleted from the server along with any associated files. Students are encouraged to remove any files they wish to keep from their account prior to finishing in school.

Respecting School Property

As is outlined in our Code of Behaviour all students are expected to respect school property. This includes any school devices both on and off site. Any misuse of the internet and/or computers within school will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Behaviour. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Usage of devices in the school is a privilege and not a right. Students may lose their privilege to use computers or others devices if they abuse their responsibilities and breach this or other school policies. If there are any issues with a computer or device, students are expected to report this to the teacher at the beginning of class, otherwise it will be presumed that the damage occurred during the student's use of that device. Students are not permitted to remove any cables from computers in the computer room. Students are also not permitted to eat in the computer room.

Student Mobile Devices

Some students have access to mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, iPads (excluding personal mobile phones) for school work purposes. These items are purchased by the school and will remain the property of the school. As with all other school devices they will be subject to

routine update, maintenance and monitoring by the administrator. The same terms apply to the use of these devices as all other school devices. Personal devices are not permitted. When the student has completed their education at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan these devices must be returned to the school. If there are any issues with these devices it must be reported immediately to the administrator. If a device needs to be removed from the student for replacement or repair, the school will try to provide a backup device if there is a suitable device available, however this may not always be possible. Student devices must be returned to the school for the duration of the Summer holidays each year to allow for routine upgrades and maintenance. The device will be returned to the student on the first day of the next school year. Where specific software is needed for educational purposes, students or the Special Educational Needs department can request that specific software be installed on their device. Students are not permitted to use any personal devices within or on the school network.

Passwords

Each user has their own individual password which is set upon first log on to the system. The user may request a password change at any time from the administrator. Users are encouraged to use strong passwords to make it difficult for others to guess their password. The sharing of passwords for user accounts and school email accounts is prohibited. Users are asked not to share their password with any other users for any reason or anyone outside of the school organisation. The network administrator can reset passwords at any time and may do so if it is suspected that a password has been shared with a third party or if there is a perceived risk to the network. This is to protect the network and any associated files or information stored on the network.

It is best practice to use strong unique passwords for user accounts and school Google accounts. Strong passwords are those that cannot be easily guessed. A strong password consists of at least 10 characters and includes a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. A unique password is a password that is only used with one account.

All users at Mercy Kilbeggan are informed of the importance of not saving passwords on any school devices. This is to protect their accounts and also to prevent any sensitive data being accessed by anyone outside of the organisation. Students are informed of the importance of not saving passwords in Computer class in First year.

Password reset requests can be carried out by the network administrator when necessary. Staff and students can request a password reset at any stage.

Photographs & Recordings

The recording of teachers, students or staff or anything derived or representative of any staff member in any format is prohibited unless prior consent is obtained. The exception is for the purposes of Classroom Based Assessments where recording of students presenting a piece of work may be essential for Junior Cycle grading purposes. In such instances where such a recording needs to take place it should only be recorded on a school device. Any photographs of students should only be taken on school devices. The photographs or recordings should be deleted from the device storage as soon as possible. The taking of photographs on the school grounds by students is prohibited unless prior approval has been granted by the Principal. The

publishing or sharing of such photographs or recordings online in any format is prohibited. The publishing or sharing of any photographs or recordings of staff members in any form is prohibited unless prior approval has been obtained from the Principal and staff member(s) involved.

Photographic & Recording Retention Policy

Throughout their time at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan and in line with our holistic educational approach, students may take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Photographs may be taken of such events and therefore student's photographs may be captured. These photographs may be used on the school website to showcase student achievement. They may also be used in the publication of brochures, newsletters, booklets etc. associated with curricular activities or may be used for open night. Any student over the age of 16 who wishes for their photo not to be used may inform the Principal in advance. For any students under the age of 16, parents may request through the Principal if they would prefer that their child's photograph is not used on the school website.

Google Classroom

The recording or photographing of students or staff or anything derived or representative of any staff member in any format through or from Google Classroom is strictly prohibited unless prior consent is obtained. When Google Classroom is used, students are expected to engage with the content posted by teachers and to complete work assigned by the required dates and return to teachers by that date if necessary. As all staff and students are provided with a school Gmail account, only school Gmail accounts are to be used to access Google Classroom or Google Meets etc. The use of personal accounts of students or staff for Google Classroom is strictly prohibited.

Google Accounts

All staff members at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan are provided with a school Gmail account. All correspondence from the Principal or Deputy Principal and any important information in relation to the operation of the school is circulated via the school email accounts. Staff and students are asked to check these regularly. Staff may contact students via their school email accounts only.

Students are also provided with a unique school Gmail account. This school Gmail account is not to be used for the creation of personal accounts outside of the school organisation. Student Gmail accounts may be used for the creating of accounts as directed by a teacher for educational purposes. The administration team of the Principal, Deputy Principal and system administrator reserve the right to monitor and randomly select Gmail accounts to monitor, to ensure that accounts are being used appropriately and for school purposes only. Personal emails are prohibited from school Gmail accounts. Any student in breach of this may have their account suspended.

Student Google accounts are retained for a period of one year after a student completes their education at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan. Students receive two emails to inform them of the cessation of their school Google account. They receive the first email approximately three months prior to the deletion of the school Google account. This email states the intended date for the deletion of their account and any associated files saved on their school Google account. This period of three months is to provide adequate notice for students to move any files that they wish to keep to a personal account or elsewhere. Students receive a final email one week prior to deletion of the account. After this, their school Google account plus any associated files will be deleted by the administrator.

Staff Google accounts are retained for a period of three months after cessation of employment at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan. Staff receive two emails to inform them of the cessation of their school Google account. They receive the first email approximately one month prior to the deletion of the school Google account. This email states the intended date for the deletion of their account and any associated files. This period of one month is to provide adequate notice for staff to move any files that they wish to keep to a personal account or elsewhere. After this, their school Google account plus any associated files will be permanently deleted by the administrator.

Online collaboration is essential to education and provides students with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, sharing and messaging among students. Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful and courteous conduct online as offline.

Google Drive

Staff and students are provided with a Google Drive facility for file storage as part of their school Google account. Staff and students are encouraged to upload any important files such as projects etc. to their Google Drive for safe keeping during their time at Mercy Secondary School Kilbeggan. Any files they wish to keep after this period should be moved to a different location prior to account deletion. The Google Drive facility is for storage of school work only and there should be no personal documents in the facility. The sharing of work between students for copying is prohibited.

Retention of Information on Emails

It is best practice for both staff and students to frequently delete emails from school Gmail accounts for data protection and storage purposes. This should be carried out at least once a month. Retained emails should be kept to an absolute minimum. Staff may, but are not obliged, to retain emails from students containing projects for safety purposes in the event that the students' copy accidently gets destroyed. After submission of the project, the email should then be deleted from the staff account.

The Principal and Deputy Principal have the right to retain emails for the running of the school.

Sensitive Files

It is recommended that any files containing sensitive information are password protected as soon as they are created. If essential emails containing student information are received by staff, they should be deleted immediately once they are read.

Social Media

The use of social media by students on school grounds is prohibited. The use of social media is strictly prohibited on school grounds and during school trips etc.

Connection of staff and students on social media is prohibited. Students are prohibited from making contact with a staff member on any form of social media.

School Devices

All school devices for both staff and students are password protected. This password can be changed by request at any stage by the administrator. Staff and students are asked not to share their password with anyone for any reason. The password policy for school devices is previously outlined in this policy. The administrator reserves the right to override passwords when required for maintenance or moderation purposes.

Staff are asked to lock their device when away from it to protect sensitive information both when in school and at home. No third party should use a staff member's school device. Devices provided by the school to staff are for school use only. This is to protect any school related information that may be stored on the device. All staff must sign up to the Staff Laptop/Device Acceptable Usage Policy. If there are any issues with a staff device, staff are asked to report the issue to the school's ICT co-ordinator(s).

Wi-Fi Use

All Wi-Fi access points in the school are password protected for security purposes. This password is not shared with any students or student devices. Any visitors to the school, such as speakers etc. who need to use the Wi-Fi can be granted access to the network by the administrators or relevant staff member. Any visitors must remove the school network from their device before leaving the school grounds.

The Wi-Fi password is not shared with students for any reason. Students have monitored full internet access provided in the computer room, both classrooms with device trolleys and also in the design and communication graphics room. Should a student need internet access outside of their computer room class time for an urgent reason, permission can be sought for access through the Principal, Deputy Principal or administrator.

Printing Resources

As digital citizens it is important to be mindful of the use of resources when printing or photocopying material. Printing of material double sided is encouraged to save on resources such as paper and ink. Any ink required for school printers must be ordered through the ICT co-ordinator(s). Where material can be shared with students on Google Classroom to prevent printing this is encouraged. Only material which is of educational value or relating to school matters may be printed. All printing for staff and students is controlled through the print credit system. Any printer drivers needed for printing of educational resources must be requested and installed through the ICT co-ordinator(s). Printing from mobile devices such as phones or iPads is prohibited.

Legislation

Ethical use encompasses all activities on the Internet that abide by the laws of society. Unethical use encompasses all activities on the Internet that do not abide by the laws of society. Staff, students, and parents should familiarise themselves with the following legislation relating to use of the internet:

• Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003

• Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998

• Interception Act 1993

• Video Recordings Act 1989

• The Data Protection Act 1988

Switch Off from Technology

In a time when technology is a large part of our lives, to achieve a work life balance staff reserve the right to switch off from school technology after 5pm. Any emails from students, etc. will be answered the next working day or as soon as is reasonably possible. Staff are encouraged to keep their school email accounts specific to their school devices and it is not necessary to have their school email accounts synced with personal mobile devices. Staff must take care to ensure that only their school email account is used to contact or reply to students.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of

Signed: *Paul Daly*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: **10th November 2022**

Signed: *Garrett Farrell*

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date : **10th November 2022**