

# **Acceptable Use of Technology Policy**

**Monkstown Educate Together N.S.**

**May 2021**

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## Introduction

Monkstown Educate Together National School (METNS or the school) recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our pupils enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate while developing key life skills. To that end, we provide access to ICT for their use. The aim of this Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUTP) is to ensure that pupils benefit from learning opportunities offered by METNS's ICT resources in a safe, positive and effective manner.

After consulting the relevant stakeholders including staff and parents/guardians, the AUTP was adopted by the Board of Management of METNS (BOM) on May 11th 2021. The BOM reserves the right to amend the AUTP, from time to time, entirely at its discretion. The AUTP will also be subject to regular formal review.

## Rationale

The AUTP outlines the guidelines and behaviours that METNS pupils are expected to follow when using current and future school ICT. Pupils are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online as offline. These rules are found in the METNS Positive Behaviour Policy. Each parent or guardian are required to complete and return the Permission Form in Appendix One or alternatively confirm their respective approval to AUTP through the Aladdin Schools Connect software app – often referred to as "Aladdin" or the "Aladdin app". In addition, each parent/guardian should may grant approval for METNS, if considered appropriate by the school, to post their child's school work on [www.metns.ie](http://www.metns.ie).

The AUTP should therefore be read in conjunction with both the METNS Anti-Bullying Policy and METNS Positive Behaviour Policy.

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

## General

- Pupils are taught about safe Internet usage during each academic year before accessing the Internet in school. Cyber-safety posters will be displayed by teachers.
- Pupils, parents and staff are advised to use resources such as [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) and [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie) for information on the safe usage of the Internet.
- The school's 'filtering' system is used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Pupils only have access to forums that have been pre-approved by METNS. Seesaw, Aladdin Schools Connect and Zoom are the platforms currently used for communication between pupils, parents/guardians and staff.
- All sessions are supervised by a teacher or special needs assistant (SNA).
- Each pupil's use of the Internet is monitored.
- Pupils should not upload or download software, music, or videos without prior permission from a staff member.

- The use of any form of removal storage (such as USB keys, memory sticks, CD-ROMs etc.) must be expressly approved by a staff member.
- Pupils must observe good ‘netiquette’ (i.e. etiquette on the Internet) at all times and must not undertake any actions that may bring METNS into disrepute.
- Good ‘netiquette’ will be demonstrated to pupils through activities on resources such as [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie).
- METNS recognises that online collaboration supports education and may provide pupils with access to a variety of tools that allow communication, sharing, and messaging among pupils.
- Parents and pupils must not request to “friend”, “follow”, “add” or “tag” a member of staff in the school on social media networks, or vice versa.
- Virus protection software is used by METNS and updated on a regular basis.

## School Devices

- METNS may provide pupils with tablet computers, digital cameras, digital recorders or other devices to promote learning both inside and outside of the school. Pupils should abide by the AUP, when using such devices both on and off the school network.
- Pupils are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to their teacher (or other staff member) immediately.
- Pupils must never move away from the app their teacher (or other staff member) has provided for them.
- Pupils may not access Google Play or the App Store or download apps to tablets or any other devices. Pupils may not delete or move apps or folders.

## World Wide Web

- Pupils must not intentionally visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials or attempt to circumvent protective software.
- Pupils must use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Pupils are taught about copyright issues relating to online learning. Pupils who copy information or images from the Internet into their assignments/homework must acknowledge the source.
- Pupils must never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Pupils should be aware that any Internet usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, is monitored.
- We ask that our pupils use common sense if they think a website does not look ‘right’. They must not click on anything if they feel is not appropriate.
- Pupils are expected to alert a member of staff (teacher or SNA) immediately to any concern for safety or security.
- Internet chat/social networking sites: pupils only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums,

messaging or other forms of electronic communication that have been prior approved by METNS.

## Email

Pupils use email under the following conditions:

- Under supervision by or permission from a teacher or SNA.
- Pupils must not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene or defamatory, or material that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Pupils must not reveal their own personal details, or such details of another person, such as home/e-mail addresses or telephone numbers.
- Pupils must be aware that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher or SNA.
- Pupils must never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the Internet.
- If pupils have any concerns about the content of any e-mail they receive at school, they must immediately inform a member of staff (e.g. teacher/SNA).

## Images/Photos

- Pupils must not take, use, share, or publish images of others without prior consent.
- Pupils' full names must not be used in association with any photographs/images.

## Website

- Pupils are given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork, and other school work on the school website, [www.metns.ie](http://www.metns.ie). The publication of pupils' work will be co-ordinated by the teaching team with responsibility for this website.
- The work of a pupil can only be published with the permission of the pupil and his/her parents or guardians.
- Permission from parents or guardians must be obtained before photographs, video and audio clips of pupils are published on the school website. This permission will be sought through the Aladdin Connect app each August/September. (See above.)
- METNS endeavours to use photos, images, clips of group activities on its website. Video clips may be password-protected.
- Personal information regarding pupils (including but not limited to home addresses and contact details) must not appear on [www.metns.ie](http://www.metns.ie).
- The school's website (and related resources) is regularly checked to ensure it contains no material that compromises the safety of pupils or staff.

## Personal Devices

- Pupils may not use personally-owned digital devices (e.g. tablet computers and digital cameras) in school without the explicit permission of the teacher. Permission slips are available from the Principal's office.
- Appropriate online behaviour including adherence to the AUP must always be displayed.
- METNS will take no responsibility for loss or damage to personally-owned digital devices.

## Mobile Phones

- Parents may apply in writing for permission for their child to bring a mobile phone to school. A form provided for this purpose is available from the school office. We recommend that children have reached 5<sup>th</sup> class before permission is sought, but recognise that occasionally children making their own way home in 4<sup>th</sup> class, may need the safety and security of a phone.
- Permission must be renewed annually.
- No pupil may bring a mobile phone to METNS unless the Principal has given permission in writing.
- Pupils' personal mobile phones may only be used during the school day for medical purposes only e.g. to assist with diabetes monitoring.
- Mobile phones must be switched off during the school day. This extends to any after-school activity in which that the relevant pupil participates.
- Where pupils have permission to have their mobile phone in school, they must leave it in the office during school trips (unless specific permission has been granted by their teacher to bring a mobile phone on the trip).
- Pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones as cameras under any circumstances in school, on school trips or during extra-curricular activities.

## Pupil Code for Online Interactions

- **Behaviour**

Be respectful of other people's views and their work.

Do not engage with online 'trolls' or cyber-bullies and immediately report online 'trolls' and cyber-bullies to a member of METNS staff or other adult.

- **Language**

Always use positive language online and be careful using capital letters, exclamation marks and emojis as these can change the meaning of what you write.

**Remember that any comments will stay on the Internet forever.**

- **Copying**

Don't take credit for other people's work and make sure to say from where you got your

information.

- **Judgement**

Don't believe everything you read on the Internet. Use your judgement and try to become aware of fake or untrue content.

Try to find more than one source for your research.

- **Privacy & Safety**

Never provide your own personal information. Never provide the personal information of other people. This includes full name, home address, date of birth, school, phone number etc. Be sensible and safe. If you ever come across something that upsets you, tell a member of staff or other adult immediately.

In addition, if pupils see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for either their personal safety or otherwise, they should bring it to the immediate attention of a teacher if they are at school or a parent/guardian if they are outside school.

## **Cyber-Bullying**

- Pupils must not send messages or post comments or photos with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will be dealt with in accordance with the METNS Anti-Bullying Policy or the METNS Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Harassing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will never be tolerated in METNS.
- In some cases, cyber-bullying is a crime. METNS is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0081/2017) and will act as required. The school supports pupils, teachers and parents/guardians in dealing with cyber-bullying.

## **Distance-Learning**

- Previously agreed guidelines for the most appropriate engagement in live platforms, have been agreed with parents/guardians. Parents have consented to adhere to these guidelines by signing a permission on the Aladdin app.

## **Online Classes or Meetings**

For online classes or meetings, pupils are expected to show respect for oneself and others in accordance with the METNS Positive Behaviour Policy. We expect the same high standards of behaviour as we would in school.

To help us get the most benefit from teaching and learning online, we ask that the following guidelines be followed:

- Parents/guardians must agree to monitor their child's participation in 'platform' classes. Younger pupils need guidance throughout the meeting whereas older children need parental supervision. It is strongly advised that the required guidance or supervision extends not only to 'platform' classes,



e.g., on Zoom, but also to any online work, including but not limited to the viewing of YouTube videos sent by teachers.

- Be aware of your surroundings. Choose a room with as little distraction as possible but with an adult close by.
- Be mindful of background noise including from other people or pets.
- Ensure that you have a clean, work-appropriate background with good lighting. It is worthwhile testing out your camera and audio before your start. Try to have all of your head showing especially your mouth, this ensures everyone can see who is talking.
- Mute your microphone when you're not speaking. Only turn it on if you are invited to speak. Muting your microphone when you're not speaking allows others to share their thoughts without distraction or frustration.
- Use the hand icon to signal that you would like to speak.
- Do not use the chat function unless invited to by your teacher. Be respectful at all times when using this function.
- Eliminate distractions and focus on the class or meeting. If you are using your phone/tablet or laptop to attend the online class or meeting, close all other apps and mute notifications.
- Stay seated and stay present during online classes or meetings. Do not leave the room or talk to others not participating in the class or meeting other than a parent/guardian.

## Violations of the AUP

Violations of the AUP may have disciplinary repercussions, including:

- Suspension of ICT privileges
- Notification to parents/guardians

Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the METNS Positive Behaviour Policy.

METNS also expressly reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

We make a reasonable effort to ensure pupils' safety and security online but will not be held accountable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of ICT.

## Roles/Responsibilities

The BOM is responsible for the formulation of the AUP.

The Principal and teaching/SNA staff are responsible for the implementation of the AUP during the school day.

Parents and guardians are responsible for the Internet usage of the pupils while they are outside school. It is important that all parents and guardians monitor their own child's Internet usage at home and ensure that their children are respectful, and aware of the risks involved.



## **Support structures**

The school regularly updates pupils and parents/guardians of key support structures and organisations that address illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

## **Further Reading**

- Data Protection Acts 1988-2018
- The EU's General Data Protection Regulation or the GDPR which took effect on 28 May 2018
- Interception of Postal Packets and Telecommunications Messages (Regulation) Act, 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0081/2017)
- See Internet Safety section at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly according to the ongoing schedule of review of school policies.

Ratified by the Board of Management, METNS on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

## Appendix One – Permission Form

**School Name:** Monkstown Educate Together National School

**Name of Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Pupil:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian

As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and have explained the contents of same to my child/children. I grant permission for my son or daughter or the child in my care to access the Internet. I understand that Internet access is intended for educational purposes. I also understand that every reasonable precaution has been taken by the school to provide for online safety, but the school cannot be held responsible if pupils access unsuitable websites.

**I accept the above paragraph** ☐

**I do not accept the above paragraph** ☐ *(Please tick as appropriate)*

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

**I accept the above paragraph** ☐

**I do not accept the above paragraph** ☐ *(Please tick as appropriate)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix Two – Staff-specific Guidance**

### **General Strategies**

- METNS staff receive regular training on Internet safety.
- Teachers using interactive whiteboards and projectors must be particularly vigilant and will preview the material being presented, to ensure that it is age-appropriate and adheres to the conditions of the AUPP.

### **Images/Photos**

- Staff educate pupils about the risks associated with the taking, using, sharing, publication and distribution of photos/images. In particular, teachers will recognise the risks attached to publishing their own photos/images on the Internet.
- Staff are permitted to take digital/video images to support educational aims but must follow school policies including the AUPP concerning the distribution of those images.
- When taking digital/video images ensure that pupils are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute.
- Photographs of pupils will only be e-mailed or otherwise shared with the permission of the teacher.
- Pictures to be published on the school's website, or elsewhere, which include pupils will be selected carefully and will comply with good practice guidance on image use.
- Pupils' full names must never be used in association with photographs.

### **School Devices**

- Teachers will decide what apps are appropriate for their class.

### **Assistive Technology**

- Staff may apply to the Department of Education and Skills for the financial support of clinician-recommended assistive technological devices on behalf of a pupil.
- The pupil will have the use of this device in school for the duration of his/her time in METNS.
- In exceptional circumstances (for example, during periods of distance learning) the pupil may work on that device outside the school.
- The device is passed on to the pupil's next school when the pupil graduates from METNS or leaves for another school.
- The "passing on" of the device will be communicated to the relevant Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator or SENO.

## Mobile Phones

### Staff

- All staff members must keep their phones on silent during school times.
- Staff may take photographs of the children using their personal device for recording or supporting educational activities only. Content may be uploaded to an approved service only for an approved purpose – e.g. Seesaw, [www.metns.ie](http://www.metns.ie). The image must immediately be deleted from the personal device/phone.
- Teachers and SNAs may switch on their phones when out of the school on a trip.

## Distance-Learning

- In circumstances where teaching cannot be conducted on the school premises, teachers and SNAs may use a range of online platforms, approved by the Principal and the BOM, to assist with distance teaching and learning.
- The school has enabled the most up to date security and privacy features which these online platforms provide.
- Staff members must adhere to relevant guidelines, including the AOTP, on the use of platforms for live engagement.
- Previously agreed upon usernames must, where relevant, be used to access the meeting.

## Guidelines for Using Zoom

Zoom has many controls meeting hosts may use to maximise the privacy and security of their meetings. At METNS, we configure Zoom, by default, to ensure meetings are as secure and private as possible. These default settings are:

### Meeting access:

1. Unique meeting IDs which are automatically generated are required for each meeting or series of meetings.
2. Passwords are required for meetings.
3. Participants are not allowed to join before the meeting host.
4. All participants are placed in a “Waiting Room” and are admitted to meetings by the host.
5. Participants cannot re-join if the host has removed them except at the host’s discretion.

### One-to-one Classes or Meetings

One-to-one classes or meetings between individual pupils and teachers or SNAs can only take place with an adult in the room with the pupil. A second staff member must be ‘present’ at the meeting with video and audio turned off.

## **Group Classes or Meetings**

Staff should engage with pupils using the same level of professionalism as in school – the environment may seem more informal but be wary of adopting an approach that could be considered too casual.

## **Data Protection Responsibilities**

- Staff are personally responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of a pupil's personal data.
- Passwords should not be 'remembered' on any personal or classroom device.
- If student information is put onto a USB memory stick or other portable device, the files on that device must be encrypted.
- Staff should log off any workstation once finished.
- When communicating information about pupils, staff should use codes/abbreviations or numbers, rather than pupil names.
- Every effort should be made to not view information of staff or pupils in public (i.e. on public transport or in other public places).
- If your job involves the processing of personal data (data that identifies a living individual), this must be done in accordance with the GDPR.

## **Recordings & Transcripts**

- Messages sent via chat are not saved.
- Participants cannot save a transcript of the call.
- Only the host (staff member) can record.
- Files cannot be transferred via chat.
- Only the host can share their screen.

## **Recommendations**

All staff must use METNS Zoom account rather than any personal Zoom account.

Further information on Zoom security features are available here [www.zoom.us/security](https://www.zoom.us/security).