



Pelletstown Educate Together National School

Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)

Whole School Policy

Ratified: 23rd April 2026

To be reviewed: Term 3, 2031

Introduction and Rationale

Pelletstown Educate Together National School aims to protect the wellbeing of its students and staff by providing a safe physical and online environment. This policy has been formulated by Pelletstown ETNS to assist staff, pupils and parents in making informed decisions in relation to the safe and practical use of technology in education. It was updated following a review of the policy in 2026, and to reflect the newly published Bí Cineálta Procedures (2024) and Child Protection Procedures (2025), as well as the school's participation in the Dublin 7 and Dublin 15 Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free initiative.

Aims

The aims of this AUP are to;

- ensure that pupils will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources, in a safe and effective manner.
- promote the beneficial, professional, ethical, lawful and productive use of the schools IT systems and to define and prohibit unacceptable use of the IT systems.
- educate users about their IT security responsibilities.
- promote practices to ensure appropriate confidentiality and non-disclosure of the school's sensitive information.

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 Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions, as outlined in the school's Relationships and Code of Positive Behaviour, will be imposed.

Before enrolling in our school, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood by parents and pupils. The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all online technologies and digital learning used in the school, not just those specifically mentioned. It is assumed that parents and carers accept the terms of the AUP unless the school is specifically notified.

General

- Internet sessions will always be supervised by a teacher.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' internet usage.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted.
- Pupils will not be permitted to download programs or apps on school laptops/ipads, staff laptops or other forms of technology.
- Pupils are not permitted to take photos or videos without the permission of their teacher, for a specific purpose (e.g. project work)
- Pupils are not permitted to take photos, video recordings or voice recordings of other pupils, or members of staff on either school or personal devices. A teacher may make an explicit exception to this, for example for group project work.
- Staff requests for app downloads should be made to the member of the ISLT with responsibility for leading ICT.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal memory sticks, CD-ROMs, or other digital storage media in school requires a teacher's permission.
- Filtering software and /or equivalent systems will be used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. The school will use NCCA approved filters as part of the school's firewall systems.
- Students and teachers will be provided with information regarding training in the area of internet safety.
- Internet safety resources will be taught as part of SPHE to 1st - 6th classes
(Appendix 1)

Online Etiquette

- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Parents and carers should be aware of our Bí Cineálta and Child Protection Policies in terms of how they relate to social media.
- Students should never post anything online that they wouldn't wish their families or school staff to see.
- Before posting a digital comment or message, pupils will be encouraged to **THINK** (to consider if it is True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary and Kind).

Internet Access

- Students will not intentionally visit websites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will not be permitted to access or use social media sites or apps on individual devices in school. Some social media sites may be used by teachers on classroom desktops as a learning tool; however, all interactions will be under the supervision of the teacher.
- If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that is concerning or inappropriate, it should be brought to the immediate attention of their class teacher.
- Students will use the internet for educational purposes, as directed by teachers, during class time.
- During 'Golden Time', pupils may be allowed to use the internet. This will be at the discretion of the teacher. However, all activities will be monitored by the class teacher.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information online.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to their studies will be in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Students will be taught to research correctly, to check sources and to present research without plagiarism and copyright infringement.
- Students should not use chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication forums.
- Students may be able to download file types, such as images or videos, PDFs, MS Office Documents, etc. when specifically requested to by the teacher. For the security of our network, such files should only be downloaded from reputable sites, and only for educational purposes.
- Students will follow each classroom's Digital Rules poster (Appendix 2) which are displayed in all classrooms. If the rules are broken, internet and device privileges will be removed, to be returned at the discretion of the teacher.

Communications and Social Media

Pelletstown ETNS acknowledges that the internet has become a two-way communication system for the school and the wider community. Services such as e-mail, Aladdin, Facebook and Instagram are used by the school community to communicate with parents and other agencies such as Oide or the NCCA. These services, although not owned by Pelletstown Educate Together NS, form part of our web services and all content that is placed on these services fall under this policy.

The following rules will apply to children and parents:

- The use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, GChat, etc. is strictly prohibited on the School network and in school.
- All online messages and comments, including emails, to the school should be respectful and in line with the school's Communication policy.
- Still images, video recordings and voice recordings cannot be taken and cannot be shared with the consent of the relevant individual, in any circumstances.
- Any messages written on social media will be treated in the same way as written messages to the school.
- Negative conversations about children, staff, parents or the school itself should never be made on social media accounts. If such comments are encountered, they should be reported to a member of staff. The school may follow the Relationships and Code of Positive Behaviour, Bí Cineálta, Child Protection, Data Protection and Communication policies, as a result.
- Parents and children should not request to "friend", "follow", "add" or "tag" a member of staff in the school on social networks.
- Advertisements should not be added to any of our social media channels, without prior permission from the principal.
- Failure to keep the above rules will result in a permanent ban on our social media accounts.
- The school acknowledges the positive role of the PTA-coordinated parent WhatsApp groups and appreciates the guidelines outlined in same. As part of this policy, Pelletstown ETNS endorses the guidelines and also requests that all members of the WhatsApp groups add a "member tag" in the settings, so that they are identifiable as a parent in that class.
- The use of Aladdin must be in line with the school's communication policy.

School Website and Social Media

Please note that the following points apply to the school website and social media profiles, including but not limited to Facebook and Instagram.

- Pupils will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or schoolwork on the World Wide Web in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website and other platforms.
- The publication of student's work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages and platforms.
- Pupils will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- Any photo or video uploaded to the internet by the school must contain a minimum of 3 unnamed pupils. Any such photos taken by staff or pupils should be uploaded (if necessary) to the school Drive folder for photos and should always be deleted from personal devices as soon as is practicable.
- Photograph size should be as small as possible (no bigger than 800x600 pixels).
- The school will endeavour to use digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Video and audio clips will not be password protected.
- The school website will avoid publishing the last name of individuals in a photograph.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and do not use pupils' names in image file names or ALT tags if published on the web.

Email and Storage

- Students may use approved class email accounts under supervision by, or with permission, from a teacher.
- Teachers will have shared class folders, on Google Drive, where pupils can store their digital work, to save storage space on the iPads. These will be shared via a 'PETNS Share' account on Gmail, with a shareable link. Students will be explicitly taught how to log in/out of sites or apps through password encryptions, log in details or QR codes. Students cannot log into this outside of when they are instructed to do so by their teacher, and may only do so to follow the explicit instructions of the teacher.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will be taught to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- The school will never directly contact students outside of school times requesting personal information of children, their activities and/or password information. If this situation occurs, students are required to report this to their teacher.
- Any class e-mail accounts will be filtered using the G-Suite tools. Settings should be amended, so that e-mail copies are sent directly to the class teacher's email account for monitoring and recording. Students will be informed of this arrangement.

Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying)

The School will ensure that staff and students know that bullying is defined as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Isolated incidents of intentional digital negative behaviour (SMS, WhatsApp or other social media posts), including offensive or hurtful messages or posts, may be shared and repeated via social media. Such sharing may result in repetition of the original digital communication, meaning that it is repeated behaviour.

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures, a school is not expected to deal with the bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. This applies to student's use of digital technologies outside of school hours. However, where this behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support the students involved.

Mobile Phones/Electronic Devices

- Pupils using their own technology in school, such as leaving a mobile phone turned on or using it in class, sending text messages, or the unauthorised taking of images or recordings, still, moving or voice, are prohibited and is in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use Policy.
- Please see the Mobile Phone and Smart Devices, and Assistive Technology policies for further information.

Staff

- The School's email systems are provided for school use. Reasonable personal use is permitted provided it is lawful, ethical and takes place during authorised breaks.
- The School reserves the right to monitor all email to ensure compliance with policy.
- Email is not a secure method of communication.
- Email is admissible evidence in any legal proceedings and carries the same weight as a letter on school headed paper.
- School email accounts may not be used to register for online services such as social networking services, games and purchasing.

Printing

- Printers are provided for educational use only. Staff should be selective about what is printed and should print in black and white as default, with colour only when necessary.
- Print only when necessary and only the necessary pages of a document.
- Double-sided printing is set as a default setting on all the printers to save paper.
- Use the photocopier function when producing a large number of copies.
- The area around printers should be kept clear and tidy.

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to the use of the internet which teachers, students, and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998
- Interception Act 1993
- Video Recordings Act 1989
- Workplace Relations Act 2015
- The Data Protection Act 1988, 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) May 2018
- Bí Cineálta Procedures for Schools (2024)
- Child Protection Procedures for Schools (2025)

Data Protection Responsibilities

- Staff are personally responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of a student's personal data.
- Student information should be password protected on all digital sites. For example, ClassDojo, Aladdin, and/or any other online portfolios or sites that require student information.
- Passwords associated with Pelletstown ETNS, its email system and its Aladdin software should not be 'remembered' on any personal or classroom device. 2FA was introduced on Aladdin in 2026, and is used by all staff members.
- If student information is put onto a USB, the files on the USB must be encrypted. This also applies if student details (including assessments or reports etc.) are being sent by email to relevant bodies (e.g. NCSE or NEPS)
- 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 (on public transport or in public places).
- The processing of personal data (data that identifies a living individual), this must be done in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation(GDPR) May 2018.

Support Structures

- The strand unit of Media Education in SPHE will focus on internet safety during May and June.
- Staff will undertake Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) in relation to the AUP and internet safety where available. Relevant information for teachers can be found at the following links: <https://www.webwise.ie/ai-online-safety/> and <https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/webwise-workshops/>
- The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with harmful use of the internet (Appendix 3).

Sanctions

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, as outlined in the school's Relationships and Code of Positive Behaviour. Sanctions can include written warnings, withdrawal of access and privileges and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. At the request of the Board of Management or as needed, the school may pass on requested data to An Garda Síochána or other parties (e.g. Tusla or the Data Protection Commissioner's Office).

Links to Other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery

The Acceptable Usage Policy of Pelletstown ETNS should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies, including;

- Data Protection Policies
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy
- Assistive Technology Policy


Ratification, communication, implementation and review

This policy was ratified and adopted by the Board of Management of Pelletstown Educate Together National School on 23rd April 2026.

This policy will be published on the school website, and a hardcopy will also be available from the school office. This policy will be brought to the attention of all staff members upon their appointment to the school.

The implementation of the policy shall be monitored by the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

This policy will be reviewed as necessary, and particularly to comply with any relevant changes to DEY guidelines, circular or legislation, or any changes and developments within curriculum and the school.

Signature of Chairperson:  Date: 23/4/26
Signature of Principal: Carthona Ní Cheallagáin Date: 23/4/26

Date: 23rd April 2026

Date for Review: Term 3, 2031

Appendix 1

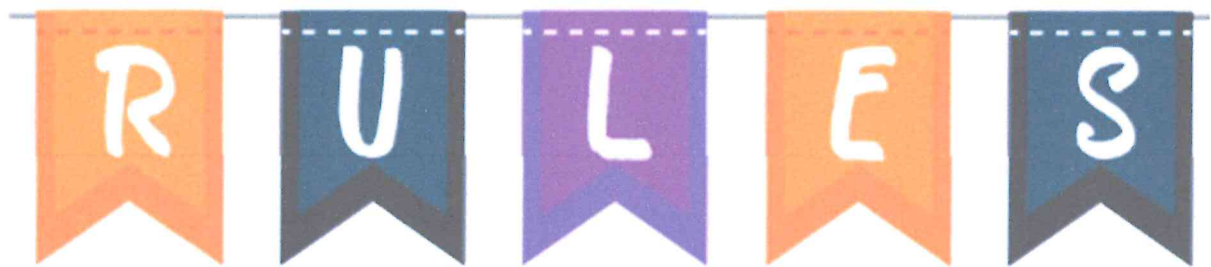
Internet Safety Lessons

(Delivered as part of the school SPHE programme in May and June)

Class	Lessons
1 st Class	HTML Heroes for 1 st /2 nd Class - Introduction & Lessons 1-2 https://heroes.webwise.ie/1st-and-2nd-class-html-heroes/
2 nd Class	HTML Heroes for 1 st /2 nd Class – Lessons 3-5 https://heroes.webwise.ie/1st-and-2nd-class-html-heroes/
3 rd Class	Lessons 1-5 of HTML Heroes for 3 rd /4 th Class: https://heroes.webwise.ie/html-heroes/
4 th Class	Lessons 6-10 of HTML Heroes for 3 rd /4 th Class: https://heroes.webwise.ie/html-heroes/
5 th Class	Lessons 1-3 of My Selfie and the Wider World https://www.webwise.ie/myselfie-wider-world/ Switched On: Modules 1-4 https://www.webwise.ie/switchedon/
6 th Class	Lessons 4 and 5 of My Selfie and the Wider World https://www.webwise.ie/myselfie-wider-world/ Switched On: Modules 5-8 https://www.webwise.ie/switchedon/
4 th , 5 th and 6 th Class	<i>Optional Additional Resources:</i> All Board for Digitown: https://www.webwise.ie/download/33224/



DIGITAL



1. MAKE SURE YOUR DESK IS CLEAR OF FOOD AND DRINK

2. USE THE DEVICE ONLY AS ASKED BY YOUR TEACHER

**3. IF YOU SEE ANTHING ONLINE THAT WORRIES YOU,
TELL YOUR TEACHER IMMEDIATELY**

**4. IF TAKING PHOTOS FOR A PROJECT, SAVE ONLY YOUR
BEST 3. DELETE EVERYTHING ELSE.**

**5. LEAVE ALL APPS, FOLDERS AND WALLPAPERS
UNCHANGED**

Appendix 3

The school recommends the following websites, which inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

- Webwise: <http://www.webwise.ie/>
- Make IT Secure: <http://makeitsecure.ie>
- Safe Internet: <http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/>
- National Parents Council Primary: www.npc.ie
- Common Sense Media: <https://www.commonsense.org/education/>