

Mitchelstown C.B.S. Acceptable Use Policy



Scope and Rationale

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.

When using the internet, students are expected:

- To always treat others with respect.
- 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.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Mitchelstown C.B.S.

The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline, and access are considered an integral part of teaching and learning. Therefore, if the school AUP is not adhered to agreed sanctions will be imposed.

Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.

Furthermore, Mitchelstown C.B.S. reserves the right to take action against incidents perpetrated when not under the direct supervision of the school, when there is a clear connection with the school and/or a demonstrable impact on its aims, work reputation and/or personnel.

The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

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.

Promoting safer internet use

The school employs a number of strategies to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

Content filtering:

Mitchelstown C.B.S. has chosen to implement Level 4 on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network. This level allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking category.

Education and awareness:

Students will be provided with education in internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE and other curriculum areas, by staff and/or external speakers.

Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to students in Mitchelstown C.B.S. through the Induction programme, pastoral care and ICT programme

Virus software:

Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.

Monitoring

Any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

Reporting and logging

Any serious online safety issues will be reported to the Deputy Principal/Principal. Students should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication. Students should report any such communications to a teacher.

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 the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet will result in disciplinary action including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges and/or detention. In extreme cases, suspension or expulsion in accordance with the school Code of Behaviour may be applied. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

Internet Use

For the protection, safety and wellbeing of all members of our school community, the following are not allowed:

- Intentionally visiting internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful, or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means.
- Copying information into assignments and failing to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other internet users.
- Downloading, viewing or sending any material that is illegal, obscene, or defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies.
- Using of torrent sites (sites facilitating downloading of large, often copyrighted files).
- Use of social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.
- Revealing one's own or anyone else's personal details or data online.
- Discussing personal information about students, staff and other members of the Mitchelstown C.B.S. community on social media.
- Engaging in activities involving social media which might bring Mitchelstown C.B.S. into disrepute.
- Representing personal views as being those of Mitchelstown C.B.S. on any social medium.
- Sharing email address, digital platform or online classroom log-in details or passwords.
- Sharing images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community, in school or outside of school.
- Engaging in any of the inappropriate activities as listed in Appendix 2.

Email and Messaging

Mitchelstown C.B.S. is a Google school. Each student is provided with a school email address (bloggs.j22@C.B.S.mitchelstown.ie).

- Students must use their own approved school email accounts for all school-based activities. Personal email addresses should not be used.
- Students should not share their email account login details with any other person.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps, and games.

- Students should be aware that email communications are monitored by the school's Google platform administrators, usually the Principal and the Assistant Principal responsible for I.T.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Students should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students should note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students should not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or "reply all" without the permission of the originator.
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

Digital Learning Platform

Mitchelstown C.B.S. digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school.

Students must only use their school email for accessing the school digital learning platform.

All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.

Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials, which must not be shared.

Google Classroom & Remote Learning

Students must use their school email address for Google Classroom. Use of any other email address means access to Google Classrooms will be denied.

Every teacher has a school email address in this domain (jbloggs@C.B.S.mitchelstown.ie)

Teachers can be contacted using email during school term during school hours.

Every teacher has established a Google classroom for each of their classes. This is accessed through a code which has been given to each student. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that they have their up-to-date access codes for every subject area that they are studying.

Code of Behaviour for Mitchelstown C.B.S. applies online in Google Classroom/Google Meets in the same way as it applies in the actual physical classroom. All breaches of the code will be dealt with according to the school rules and regulations.

Online Classes Rules/Conduct

- In the event of a school closure classes will continue online remotely.
- Students are expected to engage with online classes as they would in a school-based classroom; in a respectful manner and working to the best of their ability.
- Students are asked to log into their online classes as scheduled on their timetable.
- Roll call will be taken for online classes.
- Students should have camera feature on if requested by teacher.
- Online work and assignments should be submitted on time.
- Online behaviour must at all times be appropriate and respectful.
- Issues with Wi-Fi/Broadband should be reported to the teacher and/or school office as soon as possible.

Students should be familiar with and comply with the school's Remote Learning advice (Appendix 1)

Social Media

In use of his own device during school hours, or as per the mobile phone policy time usage, or in using school devices, the following are not allowed save and except for with the express permission of the teacher:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber,
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc.
- Use of social media platforms, including Twitter, TikTok etc.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc.

Images and Video

At Mitchelstown C.B.S. students must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission. This is an unacceptable and prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

The sharing of explicit images may be a criminal offence.

The sharing of explicit images may also incur serious school sanction, upto and including expulsion. The student(s) involved may be reported to Tusla as per Child Protection regulations.

Taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with express permission from staff.

Written permission from parents or carers will be obtained annually before photographs of students are published on the school website.

Personal Devices

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, smartwatch, in Mitchelstown C.B.S.:

- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with express permission from teaching staff.
- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time at the times outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.

Students may be required to hand up internet-enabled devices during tests/exams.

School Website

Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork, or schoolwork 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 publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.

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 website is externally moderated, with material supplied from the school.

Mitchelstown C.B.S. will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with student/parental permission.

Cyberbullying

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected to always treat others with respect.

Engaging in online activities with the intention to harm, harass, or embarrass another pupil or member of staff is an unacceptable and prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken to ensure that 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.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, does not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

A once-off incident on social media, because of the instant availability to a large number of people, may be considered bullying.

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

Policy formulation and review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

This policy has been developed by a staff working group with input from Student Council, Parent Council, and school staff.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Reported incidents in student files.
- Monitoring logs of internet activity (including sites visited).
- Internal monitoring data for network activity.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the Principal.

This policy was approved by the Board of Management on 22/09/2022.

It will be reviewed by the Board on or before 01/10/2025.

Appendix 1:

Remote/online learning

When learning online, it is important that you realise all the normal school protocols around respect apply. Behave as if you are physically in class. This means:

BE PREPARED:

- School day is 8.50 to 3.40 (Monday to Thursday) and 8.50 to 1pm on Friday – do your work within this time to allow for leisure time afterwards.
- If teachers assign work after 4pm – you can leave it until the next day.
- Have a suitable workspace – make sure the background in online classes is suitable.
- Make sure your laptop/iPad is fully charged and you have all necessary materials.
- Make sure you have the assigned work/learning/reading complete and submitted on time.
- Use your diary/journal to keep track of the work assigned and the work done.

BE PUNCTUAL:

- Be sitting at your workstation and logged in at the designated time. A student logging in late disrupts the whole class.
- Attend all classes.
- Respond to all emails sent to you by your teachers.
- Complete all assigned work on time.

BE RESPECTFUL: of your teacher and fellow students:

- Be presentable – dress appropriately.
- Be positive and support others in their learning.
- Only appropriate comments – written or spoken.
- Please and thank-you are always appreciated.

BE ENGAGED:

- Do your best.
- The work and assignments you post must be your own work.
- Do not copy work from other students or any other source and pretend that it is your own.
- Take part in class tests and assessments honestly, and do not share the answers with your classmates.

BE SECURE:

- Use your school email account.
- The school email is to be used for school communication only.
- Do not share email account login details or class codes with any other student.

REWARDS

By doing your best, you will feel good about yourself. This sense of achievement contributes to your overall wellbeing.

Most importantly, by engaging in this learning now you are paving the way to the next stage in your educational journey.

SANCTIONS

We expect students to do their best, to respect others and to behave in class:

- Inappropriate behaviour associated with online teaching and learning (e.g., See Guidelines below) will be dealt with on an individual basis, as per our Code of Behaviour, our Anti Bullying Policy and our Acceptable Use Policy.
- Sanctions can range from contacting students' parents to exclusion from online classes for a period of time.
- Disciplinary consequence for a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour/Acceptable Use Policy may lead to suspension or expulsion in certain cases.
- Mitchelstown C.B.S. reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

GUIDELINES SPECIFIC TO ONLINE BEHAVIOUR:

- Do not use words or share content that is offensive or inflammatory (this includes, but is not limited to, language, names or content that are sexist, racist, homophobic, sexually explicit, abusive, contain swearing or are otherwise likely to cause offence). If you would not say it to someone's face, do not say it online either.
- Do not 'spam' other learners by posting the same comment multiple times or by adding comments that are unrelated to the class.
- Be aware of strong language, all caps and exclamation points: It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood.
- Yes, grammar and spelling matter. Textspeak "can b gr8 4 ur friends". In an educational setting, keep it formal.
- Be careful with humour and sarcasm: You should not avoid being funny, just make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not being rude.

Appendix 2:

Inappropriate activities

Users shall not visit Internet sites, make, post, download, upload, data transfer, communicate or pass on material, remarks, proposals or comments that contain or relate to:

- Racist material
- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts
- Misuse and fraud legislation
- Pornography
- Child sexual abuse material
- 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 systems, applications, websites or other mechanism 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 permission
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic that causes network congestion and hinders other in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Any other activity considered questionable