



# Holy Family School for the Deaf

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## Acceptable Use Policy

### Introduction

Holy Family School for the Deaf is committed to developing the technological and communication skills of our students & Primary pupils and providing the necessary DT technology for teachers to support this learning.

This document addresses rights, privileges, responsibilities, and sanctions associated with the use of the internet and digital technologies including social media within the school. It applies to both online and offline usage.

### Rationale

The rationale for having an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is to advise good practice and safe, responsible use of the internet and digital technologies including social media among all members of the school community.

### Relation to Mission Statement

This policy has been developed in line with the school's mission statement and ethos which advocates a safe and caring environment for students & Primary pupils and staff. As the school embraces new technologies of the digital age there is an increasing need to raise awareness around respect for the individual and the safety of those engaging with these communication tools.

### Relation to the Digital Literacy Vision

The policy of using developments in technology to engage with students & Primary pupils and members of the school community is in keeping with the digital literacy vision of the school.

### Aims of the Policy

- Give guidance to staff, students & Primary pupils and parents/guardians that will allow them to use the internet, digital technologies, and social media safely and responsibly.
- Protect the integrity and good name of all members of the school community from online abuse.

- Outline behaviours which are unacceptable and the consequences for engaging in these.

### **School and Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

The school takes responsibility for activities that occur on school software and within school hours. Students & Primary pupils will not have access to their school email accounts and School Digital learning platforms during the summer holidays.

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to monitor their child's use of mobile phones, digital technology and other smart devices outside of school hours. Activities of a harmful/disturbing nature occurring outside should be reported to the social media platforms directly and where necessary, referred to the appropriate public bodies such as An Garda Siochana or Tusla.

### **Safeguards in place**

- Filtering software is used to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material and social media Apps.
- Access to YouTube is blocked on student school accounts.
- Teachers are facilitated to attend training in Internet safety.
- Students & Primary pupils are provided with guidance regarding the use of Digital Technology in IT and SPHE, Wellbeing classes.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software is not permitted.
- Virus protection software is used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal external digital storage media (e.g., USB's) in school requires the teacher's permission.
- Pupils taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to sanctions, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.(reference Code of Behaviour )

**In addition to Holy Family School for the Deaf Acceptable Use Policy Teachers, Special Needs Assistants and Ancillary staff are obliged to follow the standards set out in their employment contracts and by the relevant regulatory bodies.**

- The Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct is available in full at the link below.[code-of-professional-conduct-for-teachers1.pdf \(teachingcouncil.ie\)](#)

### **Internet Use**

- Students & Primary pupils and staff must not visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must use the internet for educational purposes.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Researching or downloading of materials/images not relevant to their studies or role within the school is in direct breach of the school's AUP and School Code of Behaviour.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff should be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform (GSuite), including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored.
- Failure to comply with this may result in access to the schools Wi-Fi being revoked and other sanctions being imposed as per the schools' code of behaviour. In the event of such an occurrence, alternative arrangements will be made to ensure that the students & Primary pupils learning is not disrupted.

### **Email**

- Students & Primary pupils and staff must use their school email for school related activities and for registering for school-based activities only. **The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school-based work.**
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy, harass, or intimidate another person.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students & Primary pupils must never arrange face-to-face meetings with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from the teacher.
- Students & Primary pupils must not forward email messages or screenshots of emails without permission of their teacher
- **Students & Primary pupils should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, Apps or games.**
- Students & Primary pupils should report any suspicious emails received on their school account to the teacher.
- Students & Primary pupils should report the receipt of any communication from school email accounts that make them feel uncomfortable, are offensive, threatening or bullying in nature to their teacher.

- Failure to comply with this may result in access to the schools GSuite platform being revoked and other sanctions being imposed as per the schools' code of behaviour. In the event of such an occurrence alternative arrangement will be made to ensure that the students & Primary pupils learning is not disrupted.

### **Social Media and Messaging Services**

Staff and students & Primary pupils are responsible for their own behaviour when communicating on social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications posted on social platforms if it brings the good name of the school and those associated with it into disrepute.

- All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services or the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.
- Staff must not share or discuss confidential school business on social media platforms.
- Staff and students & Primary pupils must not share personal information in relation to students & Primary pupils, staff or other members of the school community on social media.
- Staff and students & Primary pupils must not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social media service or message services.

### **Child Safeguarding**

'Sexting' or the sharing of explicit images and in particular the sharing of explicit images of pupils without their permission is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. A single incident of non-consensual sharing can have a serious effect on a student and may constitute both harassment and the distribution of child pornography. Under legislation even the consensual sharing of images can fall under the definition of child pornography.

**An incidence of this nature is in direct contravention of the law within this country and will be reported to An Garda Siochana immediately.**

We strongly urge parents/guardians to do the same should such an incident occur outside school related platforms.

### **Digital Learning Platforms**

These are online learning platforms that allow students & Primary pupils to access and absorb educational content in a strictly digital fashion in either groups or individual settings.

Examples include GSuite and Seesaw.

- Prior acceptance from parents/guardians is sought before students & Primary pupils use the schools digital learning platform.
- Digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the schools' data protection policy.
- Each user of the platform should have their own unique login details. Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.

### *Use of G Suite for Education*

- Holy Family uses the Google platform, a range of educational tools to enhance our teaching and learning. Each student (and teacher) will be furnished with a Gmail email account. This is the official email account with which to access Google Classroom. Emails from outside the school domain will not be recognised and will not be permitted to join the Google Classroom.
- On Google Classroom, each student will be given a code for each of their classes by their teacher at the start of a new school term. It is the students & Primary pupils' responsibility to ensure that they have the code for each of their subject classes.
- Material relating to that subject, messages and assignments can be posted on Google Classroom, so it is important that students & Primary pupils check their classroom regularly. Ensure that 'Email Notifications' are turned on in the 'Settings' on Google Classroom.
- Emails from students & Primary pupils to staff should only be sent during the school term and during school hours. Should a student wish to type an email outside of those hours please use the 'Schedule Send' function to deliver the message at the appropriate time.
- In the event of a school closure please refer Google classroom. Live class and/or assignment/material will be posted on Google Classroom so we ask that all students & Primary pupils follow their school timetable to keep up with learning in this event.
- If student misuses the platforms being provided for educational purposes, The school management reserves the right to revoke their privileges and suspend their access to the Digital learning platform (DLP). In the event of such an occurrence alternative arrangement will be made to ensue that the students & Primary pupils learning is not disrupted.

### *Remote Teaching & Learning*

- Teachers and students & Primary pupils must use school authorised platforms and services.
- Teachers will set clear expectations for students & Primary pupils while engaging in online learning.
- Only persons authorised by the principal/deputy principal can join the online class.
- The Code of Behaviour applies for the duration of the online learning session.

## **Chrome books, Mobile Phones and Personal Devices including Smart Devices**

### ***Inspection of Chromebooks***

As chrome books are used as school learning devices (rented /purchased from the school) they are subject to inspection and confiscation.

Students & Primary pupils may be selected at random or due to suspicion to provide their Chromebook for inspection. If a student's device is requested for an inspection, students & Primary pupils must unlock the device.

HFDS reserves the right to confiscate the device for any reason at any time if inappropriate materials are found on the device. The device will be kept in the Principals/Deputy Principals office until such a time that a parent can come in and collect it ?. The return of the device will be subject to certain behavioural conditions that all parties (students & Primary pupils and parents) will adhere to. If a criminal offence has been committed, we will inform the relevant authorities.

Student use of personal mobile phones and other personal smart devices e.g., Smart watches is strictly forbidden during school hours. Students & Primary pupils will only use personal devices in school under the direction/supervision of a teacher if they have permission and must follow the rules set out in this policy. HFDS reserves the right to confiscate these devices should they be found in use outside of this level of supervision. The return of the device will be subject to certain behavioural conditions that all parties (students & Primary pupils and parents) will adhere.

The wearing of smart watches is strictly prohibited unless sanctioned by the principal for specific purpose only.

### **Images and Video**

- Students & Primary pupils and staff must not take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Taking photos or videos on school grounds or of school property or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from school management.

- Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media during school activities.
- Students & Primary pupils and staff must not take or share images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens inside or outside school.
- Sharing or threatening to share explicit images is illegal with serious consequences for the individual/group involved in carrying out this act. Where deemed appropriate, offences of this nature will be referred to an Garda Siochana and other relevant state bodies such as TUSLA.
- In the event that this occurs outside school platforms/hours, parents/guardians should report the incident to the social media platform and to other relevant public bodies.

### **School Website**

- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Digital photographs, audio or video clips of students & Primary pupils will only be published on the school website with parental permission.
- The school website will avoid publishing the first and last name of students & Primary pupils in a photograph.
- Personal student information will not be published on school web pages.
- The website will be checked regularly to ensure there is no content that compromises the safety of students & Primary pupils or staff.
- Students & Primary pupils will continue to own the copyright of any work published.

### **Digital Communication**

- Digital communication between members of our school community, by whatever method, should take place within clear explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites and blogs.
- The school has provided an e-mail address for communication between staff and pupils. Staff should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses to pupils.
- Staff should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
- All members of the school community need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of school, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character.
- It is of the utmost importance that school business remains confidential and all discussions of school activities/business should only be discussed on official school communication platforms.

### **Digital Communication between parent/guardians, Boarding Management & staff and school staff**

- The school has provided an e-mail address for communication between staff and parent/guardians, boarding and other professional bodies Alternatively, parents/guardians may contact the school office.
- Staff should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses to parents.
- A phone (school staff mobile) for the purposes of communication with parents/guardians via text messaging/video call where (ISL is required) is available to staff in the front office. All telephone contact with parents should be made through the school landline or the designated school mobile phones.
- Communication between staff and parent/guardians and the boarding campus should only occur during school hours except in emergency situations. In the event of an emergency outside of school hours, staff/ parents should communicate on the school mobile phone number.
- During such an emergency it should be a parent/guardian who contacts the school, not students & Primary pupils unless the student is 18 years or older.

## **Cyberbullying**

*Cyberbullying is the use of technology to bully a person with the intent to hurt, humiliate or intimidate them. Cyberbullying can take many forms including exclusion online, hurtful messages/images, abusive messages/emails, intimidating someone online, etc.*

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools (Department of Education 2013) ; 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.

**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 form those involved.**

## **Sanctions for Policy infringements**

**The school reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including an Garda Siochana.**

## **Staff**

Staff infringement of this policy will be subject to Disciplinary Procedure. The disciplinary procedure shall be the relevant Department of Education & Skills Circular which pertains to same or the relevant employment contract.



## **Students & Primary pupils**

Student infringement of this policy will result in disciplinary action as per the schools' Code of Behaviour.

**Monitoring and Review** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management every three years. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists).

Signed: Fr Paddy D Boyle (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:  (Principal)

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Date of next review: February 2026

## **Appendix 1 - Useful Resources for Students & Primary pupils, Parents and Teachers**

Follow the links below for resources to assist in educating students & Primary pupils on the responsible use of the Internet and Social Media.

- <http://www.webwise.ie/>
- <http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/safety-en> (Cybercrime)
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/> (Be Safe Online)
- [www.thinkb4uclick.ie](http://www.thinkb4uclick.ie) (Webwise)
- [www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)

- [ConnectSafely - Online Safety Simplified](#)
- [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/> Be Safe Online – Ireland’s Official Online Safety Hub
- <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/assets/uploads/2023/09/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.pdf>
- <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=178608028874393&ref=bc> Facebook’s Help Centre Policies and Reporting section can be used to report offensive material to Facebook.
- <http://www.makeitsecure.org/en/young-users.html> Child Safety Online – Advice for Parents

## **Appendix 2 - Advice for students & Primary pupils about dealing with Cyber-bullying.**

### **Cyber-bullying**

This form of bullying has increased in recent years and may involve some or all of the following:

- Abusive messages or slagging
- Offensive comments
- Spreading rumours
- Posting offensive images

### **How to avoid it**

- Pick your friends online carefully.
- Limit the amount of personal information you put online.
- Keep your passwords and pin numbers to yourself.
- Don’t send a message to someone if you are angry. A post can develop into a bullying situation if others add cruel comments to it. You are responsible for your words and actions in cyberspace as in the real world.
- Be polite to others online

### **How to deal with it**

- Don't reply or get into online arguments.
- Go offline.
- Tell an adult – a parent, class tutor, deputy principal or principal
- Keep and save any bullying emails or images you have been sent.
- Take a screenshot of any comments that are threatening.
- Make a note of the time and date that messages or images were sent, along with any details you have about the sender.
- Inform your phone company or internet service provider as they can block calls, texts or messages.
- Change your contact details and distribute them only to your closest friends.
- If you know the username of the bully you can block them from your profile
- If you are getting nasty IMS (instant messages) change your online status to hidden

(This advice is from the Reach Out.Com website) [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com))

### **Appendix 3 - Advice to students & Primary pupils on the safe use of Mobile Phones**

Using your mobile phone is convenient and practical but you need to follow some safety rules to protect yourself from potential abuse or danger.

- **Don't give your number or friends' numbers to people you don't know**, especially in instant Messenger or Chat rooms.
- **Keep your security code or PIN number private.**
- **Ask permission** before taking a picture of your friends and think before sending it on. **When you send a picture you have lost control over it and it could become public.**
- **Ask permission** before posting a picture of your friends on social media sites. **When you send a picture you have lost control over it and it could become public and open to possible misuse.**
- If you get **texts, messages on social media which upset you, don't reply** but **keep a record** and **tell an adult. In serious cases you can report it to the police.**
- If you receive a **rude or embarrassing image or text about someone, don't forward it** to others. **Distributing sexual images of other young people is harassment and is illegal.** If you receive something like this, **tell an adult immediately.**

