



# Villiers School

Celebrating 200 Years

## Acceptable and Appropriate Use of Technology Policy

### Villiers School Limerick

#### 1. Introduction

Villiers School (the school) recognises that the use of technology and electronic equipment and devices is increasingly part of a modern lifestyle and that students of the school use such equipment and devices on a day-to-day basis. This equipment may be the property of the school or may belong to individuals who wish to have permission to use such equipment on the School campus or at home. The purpose of this policy is to define the acceptable use of technology and such electronic equipment both on and off the school campus.

Technology and electronic equipment and devices includes, but is not limited to: personal computers, laptops, computer peripherals, cameras, mobile phones, reading pens, sound and/or video equipment and any device which may be used to record, store and / or transmit digital or electronic communication files, messages, pictures or sounds. It also includes the schools Microsoft 365 package and all its applications, including but not limited to email and MS Teams.

Subject to the specific rules below, the possession and / or use of technology within the school, on school trips, or which in any way affects life in the school, is acceptable only when the general health and welfare of others is not put at risk. The use of technology in Villiers School, or use of technology by students which in any way affects life in the school, should be in accordance with the ethos of Villiers School.

At no time is it acceptable to use any form of technology for the purposes, intentional or otherwise, of bullying, intimidation or hurting others.

Students bring privately owned technology/electronic equipment to the School or on trips entirely at their own risk. The School will not take responsibility for, and is not liable for the misuse of, the loss of, damage to, or theft of, any privately owned equipment or devices.

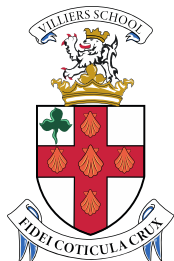
The school reserves the right to monitor and examine any and all communications transmitted using the school's ICT infrastructure and / or concerning any members of the school community and / or any communications which may bring the good name of the school into disrepute.



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## 2. Mobile Phones

It is accepted that mobile phones are widely used by students, however, (except in the case of the strict exceptions mentioned below) it is not permissible to be in personal possession of a mobile phone while on the school campus.

A student who brings a mobile phone to school must switch it off and lock it in their locker immediately on arrival at school.

If a student is found to have a mobile phone in their possession it will be confiscated, and further disciplinary action may be taken if deemed necessary.

Confiscated mobile phones will be returned at the end of class time on the Friday following its confiscation. In certain circumstances, we may require the student's parent / guardian to collect the mobile phone, rather than the student.

Exceptions:

- 1. Boarding students: see Code of Behaviour and Boarding Handbook for specific provision for boarders.**
- 2. In-class / academic use: under the explicit request, direction and supervision of a member of staff.**
- 3. Individual students may have specific permission, granted by the Headmistress, to use assistive technologies to support their learning.**
- 4. Individual students may have specific permission, granted by the Headmistress, to use assistive technologies for the purpose of managing a diagnosed medical condition.**

Phones must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others. This principle applies, but is not limited to; telephone calling, voice mailing, messaging, posting, texting, recording, sending of images, use of social media or other online platforms.

Photographs may not be taken without the prior consent of the person who is being photographed.

The creation of and/or sending of unwelcome messages or images, and the making of unwelcome calls or recorded messages to others is regarded as a serious offence. Students who, in the opinion of the school, engage in such undesirable behaviour may be banned from bringing a mobile phone onto the campus, and face other disciplinary action as set down in the Villiers School code of behaviour.



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Use of mobile phones to download, store, record or transmit unacceptable images, video, sound, messages, texts, recordings or other files is entirely unacceptable and will lead to the confiscation of the phone and further disciplinary actions as set out in the Villiers School Code of Behaviour.

The school reserves the right to request a student to submit his/her mobile phone for inspection if, in the opinion of the school, there is suspicion of inappropriate use.

Phones brought to school are entirely at the owner's risk and the school will not accept any responsibility for loss, theft, or damage.

### 3. Safe use of all other electronic devices

Students should not use electronic technology devices whilst in school, except for the strict exemptions listed below..

Electronic technological devices should not be taken to school, however if a student does, against advice, bring any electronic devices in school, the device must be switched off and locked in the student's locker during the school day.

If a pupil is found to have an unauthorised electronic technological device in their possession on school premises, it will be confiscated.

Exceptions:

- 1. Boarding students: see Code of Behaviour and Boarding Handbook for specific provision for boarders.**
- 2. In class use: under the request, direction and supervision of a member of staff**
- 3. Individual students may have specific permission to use assistive technologies to support their learning.**
- 4. Individual students may have specific permission to use assistive technologies for the purpose of managing a diagnosed medical condition.**

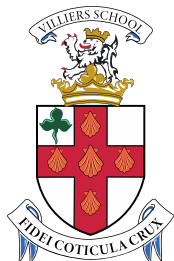
Electronic devices must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others.



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Photographs, sound recordings, video, etc. should not be taken or shared without the prior consent of the person who is being recorded.

Any use of electronic devices to hurt or intimidate others is forbidden. Any such occurrence will be viewed by the School as an act of bullying and may result in the confiscation of the device and further disciplinary action as set down in the Villiers School Code of Behaviour. The school reserves the right to request a student to submit the device for inspection, if there is suspicion of inappropriate use.

#### 4 Sanctions for the misuse of private electronic equipment, technology, or devices

Villiers School reserves the right to confiscate any privately owned electronic equipment which, in the reasonable opinion of the school, may have been used to intimidate, hurt or offend another person.

The school also reserves the right to prohibit the use of certain equipment in the school where the health, safety or welfare of any person, including the owner of the equipment, is judged to be at risk. Where electronic equipment is judged to contain inappropriate or offensive material, the school reserves the right to inspect such equipment.

The school reserves the right to review contents of all devices, accounts, including personal accounts and devices, if an investigation into an alleged or suspected breach of this AUP is deemed necessary.

Where equipment is believed to have been used in the possible abuse of others, or where possible legal issues may arise in the future, the school reserves the right to hold the privately owned electronic equipment until legal advice has been received. This may include reporting to An Garda Síochana.

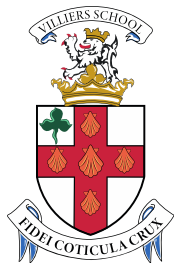
In the case of repeated misuse of technological or electronic equipment or devices, or where a serious offence has occurred, a student may be suspended from the school. The school reserves the right to remove from the school register any student who continues to intimidate others with the use of such equipment/technology, despite warnings, or where a serious offence is judged to merit removal from the school.



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## 5. The School Computer Network

As with all technology, the school encourages students to view online resources as tools to further assist study and education generally. At certain times, this may be extended to the use of online resources for leisure purposes, under the direction of a member of staff.

As information on the internet appears, disappears and changes, it is not always possible to predict or control what students may locate or use. They might encounter information that is inaccurate, controversial, and potentially harmful. The school cannot guarantee, despite best efforts to the contrary, that this will not happen.

As part of the school's IT programme we offer pupils, NCTE filtered, access to the internet. The internet is used to further educational and / or recreational goals and objectives, but students may, accidentally or intentionally, gain access to undesirable materials.

The benefits to pupils from access to the internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages, but ultimately, parents and guardians are responsible for setting and conveying the attitudes and standards that their children should follow when using the internet, including media and information sources.

During school, teachers may guide students toward materials suited to their courses. Outside school, families bear the same responsibility for such guidance for information sources such as streaming services, television, telephones, magazines and other media which may contain potentially offensive material.

In exercising its duty of care, the School uses NCTE filtering software on its education network to prevent accidental or intentional access to unsuitable websites. It is impossible to filter out every potentially harmful website, but a genuine effort is made to continually do this. These filters are automatically updated on a regular basis.

Access to the internet by students is closely monitored by the network manager, and amended if required, so that if a site appears to have by-passed the filters it is blocked to prevent further access. The school uses software to monitor all use of the school computer facilities.

The school has invested heavily in advanced computer facilities and these need to be protected for the use and benefit of all students and staff. Parents should note that while every reasonable precaution is taken by the school to provide for online safety, Villiers School cannot be held responsible if students, accidentally or intentionally, access unsuitable materials.



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This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), which is based on the government sponsored NCTE AUP guidelines, is part of the school's general policies and parents and guardians are required reinforce the standards required for acceptable and appropriate use as detailed in this AUP.

Students have personal and individual responsibility to ensure that their behaviour when using technology and electronic devices is at all times within the standards set in this policy, as well as within the standards expected by the Code of Behaviour, the Anti Bullying Policy and the Boarding School Handbook.

The aim of this AUP is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's electronic infrastructure in a safe and effective manner, while also protecting this school resource. 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 sanctions will be imposed. This AUP will be updated as the need arises, and updates will be posted on the school website.

The school provides access to computers to help achieve its educational aims and objectives. In this context, certain uses are permissible, and others are prohibited. In general, subject to the rules below, uses which are consistent with the School's educational aims and objectives are permissible, i.e. students may use School computer facilities for school related educational purposes and, with staff agreement, for leisure activities, when appropriate.

If in doubt about a particular use (e.g., accessing certain websites), students should err on the side of caution and avoid that particular use.

6. Students are expected to abide by the spirit of the AUP rules.

### School's strategy

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the use of computer facilities, the Internet and/or email facilities. These strategies include:

- Reserving the right to refuse access to its IT facilities
- Filtering software and/or integrated management systems to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material
- Regularly monitoring and archiving internet usage by checking user files, temporary Internet files, history files and/or logs in the filtering software
- Using virus protection software

As part of this strategy the following rules will apply:

- Students making use of the facilities are expected to act in a mature, responsible, fair and appropriate manner.



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- Students may not examine, change or use another user's network/logon account.
- Students shall not reveal their logon password to another student nor shall they logon another student or allow another student to logon using their account.

## Computer Equipment and Network

- Students should ensure that the School computer facilities are not damaged by their actions.
- Food or drink is not allowed in the computer rooms.

Students should not bring bags into the computer rooms.

- Each user must check the computer or electronic device they use for obvious damage before using it and report any damage to their teacher immediately.
- Students are prohibited from tampering with or modifying any school ICT device. Any student found modifying or otherwise damaging any hardware will be subject to disciplinary action.
  - Students must follow teacher instructions regarding the use of the computer rooms and facilities.
  - Students shall not connect or disconnect any school computer equipment without the written permission of the network manager.
  - Students may not use personal DVD/CD-ROMs in school computers.
  - Students MUST log off their account when they have finished using a computer.
  - Software of any type is NOT to be downloaded from email or the internet, installed, or run on any School computer without the express permission of the Network Manager.
- Students may use the Internet for school related educational purposes only.
  - Uploading and downloading of software, music, film and video, streaming, and the use of peer-to-peer applications are prohibited on school devices. Students should note that such activity may also be illegal and be subject to external penalties / legal ramifications.
  - Students may not upload, download or otherwise transmit material that is copyrighted.
  - Students may not visit, contribute to or download from internet, sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable material(s).
  - Students are obliged to report any material of the above nature to a member of staff of which they are aware or suspect



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- Similarly, students will immediately report any material of an objectionable nature to a member of staff.
- Students may not disclose or publicise personal or confidential information, for example, their own or another's home address, telephone numbers, name and location of their school.
- Students shall not use any facilities, including the school computer facilities to bring the School into disrepute, nor access or publish defamatory, obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable material.
- Students should be aware of the School's responsibility to report inappropriate activity to the relevant authorities.
- Students should be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving of any information, school-related or personal, is monitored for unusual activity, security, and/or network management reasons and for pastoral care purposes.

## Email

- All students have a school email account. Students may access their School email outside of the School (for example, on their home computer).
- Students shall not use any email facility to bring the school into disrepute, nor access or publish defamatory, obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable material. Students should be aware of the school's responsibility to report inappropriate activity to the relevant authorities.
- Students who access their school email outside of the school must abide by the AUP rules for use of the school email facilities.
- Students shall not send or forward chain email.
  
- Students are prohibited from arranging to meet someone outside school via school email, internet, or computer facilities.
- Students should note that there are restrictions in sending attachments.
- Students must only use their school email accounts (or other school-based online platforms) to correspond with members of the school staff.
- Students are requested to be respectful of staff member's working hours and be respectful of their personal time. Students are therefore asked not to contact members of the day time staff (including teachers, SNAs, and administrative and maintenance staff) outside of regular working hours, unless in extreme emergency. It is not acceptable to contact members of the day staff late at night or at weekends, unless that staff member is at work, or in the case of an extreme emergency. This is reflected in current legislation.



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## Printing

Students are allowed a number of print credits each year. These credits are assigned to each individual student and must not be shared. Students are asked to be mindful of our global footprint and print only school-related documents when absolutely essential, when specifically instructed to do so by a member of staff, and / or when it is not feasible to complete the task in a paperless manner. Colour printing is restricted.

## School Website and social media platforms:

- The school website address is [www.villiers-school.com](http://www.villiers-school.com).
- Students may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork, opinion pieces, schoolwork on the school's social media platforms, including the school website.
- The school may, from time to time, publish on the school website and social media platforms photographs of students engaged in school activities, subject to the school's Data Protection Policy.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a member of staff.

## Bullying

- Students should note that the school's Anti-Bullying Policy applies also to the use of the school electronic facilities.
- School IT facilities, or any IT facilities/technologies must never be used to bully, intimidate or hurt others.
- Students who maintain their own websites, use social media or operate electronic devices should not use these resources to bully, intimidate, or hurt others. Images or other files relating to the School or to individuals in the school should not be posted to websites without the consent of the school or of the individual, and in all cases, identifiers, such as names, should not be attached to such images or files

## Sanctions

Misuse of the electronic infrastructure or personal misuse of personal technologies/equipment will result in disciplinary action, withdrawal of access privileges, and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

The School will hold liable for ensuing costs persons responsible for:

- Any malicious act(s) in or on the computer facilities,
- Graffiti or other acts of vandalism,



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- Any attempt(s) to bypass or compromise the software and/or hardware, including security features, of the School's computer network(s),
- Any other damage caused by unauthorized use.

Students who have doubts about use of the computer facilities should seek the advice of an authorized member of staff before using or continuing to use the facilities.

*Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Management 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021*



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