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# Scariff Community College



## Internet Acceptable Use Policy

**Date of Commencement: June 2026**

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## General Approach

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

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP at least annually. Before signing, the AUP should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- 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.

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

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Scariff Community College.

- It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in Scariff Community College.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school's continuum of supports and sanctions, considering:

The nature and seriousness of the behaviour

The intent and understanding of the student

The impact on others

School management and staff work in partnership with parents/guardians to support safe ICT use.

Scariff Community College will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of students or staff under this policy and associated Codes of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying policies. In such cases Scariff Community College will, where known, inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Scariff Community College implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Internet safety will be encouraged through Digital Media Literacy, SPHE programmes and other curriculum areas.
- Internet safety advice and support opportunities are provided to students in Scariff Community College through our 1st Year Student Induction Programme, Pastoral Care provisions, Digital Literacy Plan and Subject Provision
- Teachers will be provided with opportunities for continuing professional development in the area of Internet Safety.
- Scariff Community College participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer more effective use of the internet.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the following stakeholders:

Board of Management and key stakeholders

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Surveys and/or questionnaires of students, parents and teaching staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, Angela McNamara (Principal) and/or Laura Kearney (Deputy Principal) must be informed.

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## Content Filtering

Scariff Community College has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network:

**Level 4** 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.

## Internet Use

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- 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 Angela McNamara (Principal) and/or Laura Kearney (Deputy Principal)
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students and staff will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Students are expected to use the Internet during the school day for educational purposes only.
- Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Students will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.
- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

## **Email and Messaging**

Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is allowed with staff permission.

The use of personal email accounts is not allowed at Scariff Community College.

- Students will use approved school email accounts.
- Students should not under any circumstances share their email account login details with other students.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services such as social networking services, apps and games.

Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

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 avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, students should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.

Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.

Students must only use their school email for school related activities and for registering on school-based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school-based work.

Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.

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Students should 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.

All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

## **Social Media and messaging services for Staff and Students**

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that members of Scariff Community School are expected to follow when using social media.

The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The internet is a fast-moving technology, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Scariff Community College:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in Scariff Community College.
- Use of blogs such as WordPress, Tumblr etc. is allowed in Scariff Community College with express permission from teaching staff.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is with express permission from teaching staff.

All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame others.

Staff and students must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other members of the Scariff Community College community on social media.

Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Scariff Community College into disrepute.

Staff and students must not represent personal views as those of being Scariff Community College on any social medium.

Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

Teachers can read further information about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication here: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/2021/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.html>

The following statements apply to the use of internet-enabled devices such as tablets, gaming devices, smartwatches, in Scariff Community College:

- Students are only allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during lessons with expressed permission from teaching staff.
- Students are not allowed to use personal internet-enabled devices during social time.

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## **Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)**

Scariff Community College's digital learning platform (Microsoft Office) is managed by the school. This platform enables two-way communication.

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

Only school devices should be used for the purposes of capturing and storing media.

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

The use of digital platforms should be used in line with considerations set out in the school's data protection plan (GDPR).

Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.

Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.

Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.

Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

## **Audio, images and video**

Care should be taken when capturing audio, photographic or video images that students are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or Scariff Community College into disrepute.

At Scariff Community College, students must not create, take, use, share, publish or distribute images or record audio of others without their permission.

Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities by school staff is allowed once care is taken that no harm is done to staff or pupils of Scariff Community College.

Prior approval from parents/guardians will be obtained before video, audio or photographs of students are published on the school website.

Students must not share audio, images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community regardless of whether this happens in school or outside.

Sharing explicit images/video and in particular explicit images/video of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. An appropriate sanction will apply in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

## **Inappropriate Activities**

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- Misuse and fraud legislation
- Racist material
- Pornography
- 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 school systems to run a private business
- Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms 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 permissions
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling

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- Online shopping
  - Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
  - Child sexual abuse material
  - Any other activity considered questionable

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## **School Website**

The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

Scariff Community College will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities. Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.

Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Scariff Community College web pages.

## **Cyberbullying**

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Scariff Community College considers that posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out using information and communication technologies such as text, social media, e-mail, messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyberbullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyberbullying.

Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the student's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyberbullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Schools, Scariff Community College considers that 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.

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 student or member of staff is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Measures are taken by Scariff Community College to ensure that staff and students are aware 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

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people or groups of people in society. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

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

In accordance with the Department of Education *Bí Cineálta* Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools; Scariff Community College considers that a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their *Bí Cineálta* policy.

## Artificial Intelligence

Scariff Community College recognises the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a valuable educational tool. Scariff Community College is committed to its responsible, appropriate and ethical use within our learning environment. AI systems used in Scariff Community College should at all times adhere to the principles of fairness, transparency and accountability. The selection of AI tools and technologies in Scariff Community College aligns with educational goals, including supporting learner agency and promoting critical thinking.

AI Generated material is allowed for the purpose of research, brainstorming ideas, exploring concepts, generating examples, enhancing understanding and revising text. Students must reference the appropriate use of AI text and images when used in assignments/homework.

However, AI must not be used to produce work that replaces a student's own thinking, creativity or effort. All submitted work must represent the student's authentic understanding and ability. The use of AI to generate assignments, essays or other assessed material that is presented as a student's own work is strictly prohibited.

This expectation is particularly critical in the context of state examinations and formal assessments, where the integrity and independence of student work must be fully upheld.

Students are encouraged to use AI responsibly, transparently, and as a support tool only, ensuring that it enhances student learning. Breaches of this policy will be treated in line with the school's Code of Behaviour procedures.

Scariff Community College provides training and professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively utilise AI tools in their teaching practices, ensuring they stay up to date with technological advancements.

Scariff Community College promotes digital literacy and critical thinking skills to help learners understand AI, its implications and responsible usage. This includes data literacy, verification of AI-generated information and recognising potential biases in AI tools.

A regular review of the impact of AI on learning outcomes is to be conducted to ensure continuous improvement.

All AI tools authorised for use in Scariff Community College comply with data protection regulations (GDPR).

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Entering personal, sensitive, or confidential data into any AI system without proper authorisation is strictly prohibited.

Students will not create, share or send any AI generated material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.

Staff and students must not use AI in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame learners, their family members, staff, other members of the Scariff Community College community.

Staff and students must not engage in activities involving AI generated material which might bring Scariff Community College into disrepute.

## Permission Forms

### Legislation

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

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

### Support Structures

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

### Sanctions

Misuse of the Internet and digital technologies should be referred to in the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy and related sanctions regarding misuse as appropriate should be outlined therein. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities, including An Garda Síochána.

I agree to follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy on the use of the internet and digital technologies. I will use the internet and digital technologies in a responsible way and obey all the procedures outlined in the policy.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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As the parent or legal guardian of the above student, I have read the Acceptable Use Policy and 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 students access unsuitable websites.

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 Policy relating to publishing students' work on the school website.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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Signed: *Clr Pat Hayes* Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2026  
*Cllr. Pat Hayes, Chairperson, Board of Management*

Signed: *Angela McNamara* Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2026  
*Angela McNamara, Principal*

\*(Policy with real signature on file)