

Ratoath College

ICT Usage Policy (Sept 2012)

Designing our Policy

Our ICT Usage Policy has been written and agreed by all the partners in Ratoath College in accordance with government guidelines. This policy has been updated to take account of advances in ICT including WIFI access throughout the campus. This covers students who may use technology while on the school premises or on school tour.

The staffs of Ratoath College have a separate Acceptable Usage Policy and Security Guidelines which is governed by Co Meath VEC.

1.0 Introduction

Ratoath College recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our students enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life. To that end, Ratoath College provides access to ICT for student use.

This *ICT Usage Policy* outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our students are expected to follow when using school technologies or when using personally-owned devices on the Ratoath College campus or at Ratoath College organised activities.

2.0 Technologies Covered

Ratoath College may provide students with Internet access, desktop computers, digital imaging equipment, laptop or tablet devices, video-conferencing capabilities, virtual learning environments, online collaboration capabilities, online discussion forums, email and more.

As new technologies emerge, Ratoath College may provide access to them also.

The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all online technologies used in the school, not just those specifically mentioned.

3.0 Ratoath College ICT Network

Ratoath College ICT network is intended for educational purposes. All activity over the network may be monitored and retained. Access to online content via the network is restricted in accordance with policies of Meath V.E.C. and the Department of Education and Skills, through its agency, the National Centre for Technology in Education.

Students are expected to respect that the web filter is a safety precaution, and should not try to circumvent it when browsing the Web. If a site is blocked and a student believes it should not be, the student can ask his/her teacher submit the site in question for review. This is done through our ICT helpdesk via Meath VEC.

- Students are expected to follow the same rules for good behaviour and respectful conduct online, as offline – these rules can be found in the Ratoath College’s existing *Code of Behaviour*.
- Misuse of school resources may result in disciplinary action.
- We make a reasonable effort to ensure students’ safety and security online, but will not be held accountable or liable for any harm or damages that result from misuse of school technologies.
- Students are expected to alert his/her teacher immediately of any concerns for safety or security.

3.1 Email and online collaboration

- Ratoath College provides students with email accounts for the purpose of school-related communication.
- Email accounts should be used with care. Email usage may be monitored and archived.
- Ratoath College recognises that online collaboration can have an educational value and Ratoath College may provide students with access to a variety of online tools that allow communication, information sharing, and messaging among students.
- Students are expected to communicate with the same appropriate, safe, mindful and courteous conduct online as offline.

3.2 Ratoath College’s own mobile devices

Ratoath College may provide students with mobile computers, digital recorders or other devices to promote learning both inside and outside of the school. Students should abide by the same policy, when using school devices off the school network, as on the school network.

Students are expected to treat these devices with respect and should report any loss, damage, or malfunction to their Caomhnóir (or classroom teacher) immediately. Students may be financially accountable for any damage resulting from negligence or misuse. Use of school-issued mobile devices may be monitored and archived.

3.3 Mobile devices in the possession of Ratoath College students

Students may only use personally owned devices (e.g. laptops, tablets-computers, digital-cameras, and smart-phones, etc.) for educational purposes, if directed by their classroom teacher.

Appropriate online behavior and adherence to the ICT Usage Policy applies equally to all students and all devices, when using the Ratoath College network.

4.0 Ratoath College Website

Our website is provided by Meath VEC and is located at <http://www.ratoathcollege.ie>. Ratoath College is committed to using our website in order to promote our school, showcase student work and to provide information for our students, their parents/guardians and the general public. Ratoath College may also make use of other self-controlled websites to this end.

- Students may be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or other schoolwork on the World Wide Web.
- Student's work will appear in an educational context on Web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- The creation and publishing of photographs, audio and video clips will focus on educational activities.
- Personal information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- Ratoath College will continue to own the copyright on any work it publishes.

5.0 Ratoath College ICT Security

Students are expected to take reasonable safeguards against the transmission of security threats over the school network. This includes not opening or distributing infected files or programmes and not opening files or programmes of unknown or un-trusted origin.

Students should use common sense if a website does not look right and should inform a teacher before clicking on anything they deem to be not right.

If students believe a computer or mobile device might be infected with a virus, they should alert a teacher. Students should not attempt to remove the virus or download any programmes to help remove the virus.

5.1 Downloading files & Programmes

Students should not download or attempt to download or run *.exe* programmes over the school network or onto any school resources or devices. Students may be able to download other file types, such as images or videos, PDF, MS Office Documents, etc.

For the security of our network, download such files only from reputable sites, and only for educational purposes.

5.0 Netiquette

Netiquette may be defined as appropriate social behavior over computer networks and in particular in the online environment. To this end:

- Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Students should also recognise that not all online content is correct or appropriate and should use trusted sources when conducting research online.
- Students should never post anything online that they wouldn't wish their grandparents, Parents/guardians, teachers, future colleges or employers to see. *Once something is online, it is out there - and can sometimes be shared and spread in ways students never intended.*

6.1 Plagiarism

- Students should not plagiarise content (copy or use as your own without citing the original creator), including words or images, from the Internet.
- Students should not take credit for articles they didn't create themselves, or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the Internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.
- The school may check for plagiarism using online tools as are available for such purposes.
- At times, the school may encourage students who create original content to claim copyright ownership of their work using a [*Creative Commons*](#) license.

6.2 Personal Safety

If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, bring it to the immediate attention of:

- A teacher if at school or on a school activity.
- A parent / guardian if at home.

Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone

numbers, addresses, PPS numbers and birth-dates over the Internet.

Students should never agree to meet someone in real life, who they have met online.

6.3 Cyber-bullying (this section should be read on conjunction with all other school policies)

Harassing, fraping, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are some examples of cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying will not be tolerated in Ratoath College. In many cases, cyber-bullying is a

crime.

Students should remember that all online activities are monitored and retained.

Note to students:

Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments or photos with the intent of scaring, hurting, annoying or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically, mentally or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and immediate loss of privileges.

Ratoath College will support students, teachers and parents in dealing with cyber-

Bullying. Ratoath College is committed to the [*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools \(Circular 0065/2011\)*](#) and will act as required by [*Meath VEC*](#), the [*Department of Education and Skills*](#), the [*Department of Children and Youth Affairs*](#), the [*Department of Justice and Equality*](#) and the [*Health Service Executive*](#).

6.0 Sanctions for Policy infringements

Infringements of this policy in may have disciplinary repercussions, including, (but not exclusively):

- Suspension of network and computer privileges
- Notification to parents
- Detention
- Suspension from school and/or school-related activities
- Exclusion
- Legal action and/or prosecution

Student ICT Student Usage Contract

I have read the Ratoath College ICT Usage Policy and I agree with both the word and spirit of the document. In addition to the Ratoath College ICT Usage Policy...

I will:

- Use school technologies for school-related activities and research.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow when offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert teachers if there is any problem with their operation.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.

- Alert a teacher if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for educational pursuits only.
- Cite sources when using online sites and resources for research; ensure there is no copyright infringement.
- Recognise that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.

Furthermore, I will not:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others.
- Search inappropriate images or content.
- Engage in cyber-bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
- Try to find ways to circumvent the school’s safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
- Plagiarise content (copy, use as their own, without citing the original creator) I find online.
- Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others.
- Agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
- Attempt to access sites, servers, accounts, or content that isn’t intended for my use.

(The above lists are not intended to be an exhaustive list and students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.)

(Students Printed Name)

(Students Signature)

(Rang)

Parents/Guardians:

I have read and understood this ICT Usage Policy and agree to abide by it, in word and in spirit. I have also discussed this Policy with my child:

(Parent/Guardian Printed Name)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

Date