



Ennis National School

Internet and Technology **Use Agreement**

Informed by students, teachers, Board of Management & parents/guardians of Ennis National School. Compiled in conjunction with Dr. Maureen Griffin, Forensic Psychologist, Director MGMS Training Limited.



Background

To This Agreement

In today's digital world, mobile phones have become a central part of daily life, even for young children. While they offer convenience and connectivity, excessive use of mobile phones can impact a child's well-being, focus, social skills, and overall development. Here in Ennis National School we believe that setting clear boundaries around mobile phone usage is crucial in fostering a healthy, balanced lifestyle for our students.

We are aware that issues such as cyberbullying, sending inappropriate material and exposure to age inappropriate content are posing a huge threat to the online safety and wellbeing of our students. As a school, we want to help ensure our students are happy and safe not only in real-life but also online.

Parents also face immense pressure when it comes to keeping abreast of social media, gaming and other online activities. They also face great financial pressure in relation to purchasing and maintaining digital devices and online services that their children wish to have.

This agreement outlines our commitment to limiting mobile phone use for children to promote their social, emotional, and academic growth. By reducing distractions and screen time, we can encourage more meaningful face-to-face interactions, active play, creativity, and better sleep patterns. This approach will help children develop critical thinking skills, maintain focus on their studies, and build stronger relationships. We understand that mobile phones can be useful for safety and communication, but we encourage families to explore alternative ways of staying connected. This charter provides guidelines and suggestions for managing phone use at home while supporting our efforts at school. Together, we can create a healthier environment that prioritizes the well-being and growth of every child. This voluntary agreement follows the process of Consultation, School Profile and Identification of Issues of Concern (3 Year Plan) , to help assist pupils, parents, teachers and members of the wider school community to navigate safely the online world.



Findings

Pupils Perspective

- Over 90% of the pupils said that the time limits should be in place and should be adjusted for school times and holiday times.
- Over 90% of pupils agree that there should be time limits placed upon online activity.
- 22% of pupils have encountered negative issues online such as unwarranted messages, mean messages and rude people.
- 55% of pupils feel that devices should not be allowed in their bedrooms overnight.



Staff Perspective

- The main concerns reported by members of staff include
- Cyberbullying and intimidation of pupils outside of school hours online
- Viewing content that is not suitable to the age of the pupil
- Pupils being online late at night impacting concentration and energy levels
- Isolation of pupils from group chats
- Security and privacy concerns regarding pupils bringing devices to school that can record visual and audio content.



Parents Perspective

Over 90% of the parents surveyed stated that they would like support with issues such as social media, gaming, applications and parental controls.

85% of parents are unsure where to report issues that arise online.

Over 90% of parents are in support of an agreement in relation to the use of internet enabled devices.

From our consultation with staff, pupils and parents the priority areas of concern are as follows

- Screen Time
- Age of Acquiring an internet enabled device (Year 1 Priority)
- Sleep habits (Year 1 Priority)
- Online security and privacy
- Parental controls and setting limits

This list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Screen Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend the following:

For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting. Parents of children aged 18 to 24 months, who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming, and watch it with their children to help them understand what they are viewing.

For children aged 2 to 5 years, screen media should be limited to 1 hour per day, of high quality programmes.

For children aged 6 years and older, the AAP recommends that consistent limits should be placed on the time spent using screens and the types of media, so as to ensure that screens do not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviours essential to health.

The AAP recommend that families devise a Family Media Use Plan and have also developed a Screen Time Calculator to assist parents in determining the appropriate amount of screen time for their child, depending on their age and activities they may be engaged in. Parents can access this resource from- <http://healthychildren.org/MediaUsePlan>

Note: Not all screen time is equal, so WHAT your child is doing online is as important as HOW LONG they spend online. Organizations like Common Sense Media <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/> can help parents evaluate media content and make decisions about what is appropriate for their family.



Agreement

As parent/s/guardians of a child in Ennis National School, we agree to the following:

1. To devise a Family Media Use plan;
2. To use the screen time calculator to limit screen time in line with my/our child's age, and ensure that screens do not take the place of adequate sleep, physical activity and other behaviours essential to health.

Age of **First Device**

Dr. Mary Aiken, the world's leading cyberpsychologist states that no child under the age of 14 should own a smartphone, as it can "facilitate the remote, covert and deviant targeting and grooming of a child".

- Among parents who responded to the questionnaire, the majority indicated they felt a child should be 13 years old before getting a smartphone.
- In reality, children do not make a lot of calls, they want a portable device to use their Apps on. Tablets, iPads and game consoles all offer this, although they may be less portable. Therefore, we need to look, not just at smartphones, but all internet enabled devices which allow our children to use Chatting Apps/ Social Networking Sites etc. For this reason, sole ownership of all internet enabled devices should be restricted to those aged 14 years and older. This is not to say they cannot use devices, there are amazing educational benefits of technology, but a child under 14 years should not have to deal with the pressures and risks of maintaining their own device.

Agreement

As parents/guardians of a child in Ennis National School, we agree to the following;

- **To restrict sole ownership of smartphones to those aged 14 years and over;**
- To be mindful of all internet enabled devices my/our child uses, as they can allow the same functions as a smartphone. Sole ownership of internet enabled devices should be restricted to those aged 14 years and over;
- To make sure that when allowing my child to use my own device, that parental controls are in place including filtering and safe search restrictions.

Social Media and **Communication Apps**

Children are at great risk of being exposed to harmful content on social media, ranging from violent and inappropriate content, to bullying and harassment. And for too many children, social media use is compromising their sleep and valuable in-person time with family and friends. We are in the middle of a national youth mental health crisis, and I am concerned that social media is an important driver of that crisis – one that we must urgently address." Children and adolescents who use social media for many hours a day, are also at higher risk for behavioural problems, cyberbullying, online grooming, sleep difficulties, eye problems, (such as myopia, eye fatigue, dryness, blurry vision, irritation, burning sensation, conjunctival injection, ocular redness, and dry eye disease), and headaches.

Agreement

As parents/guardians of pupils attending Ennis National School we agree to the following;

1. Pupils will not have social networking accounts on social media platforms for users that must be 13 years plus. The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16 years.
2. Class group messaging and group chats are not permitted.

Sleep

Habits

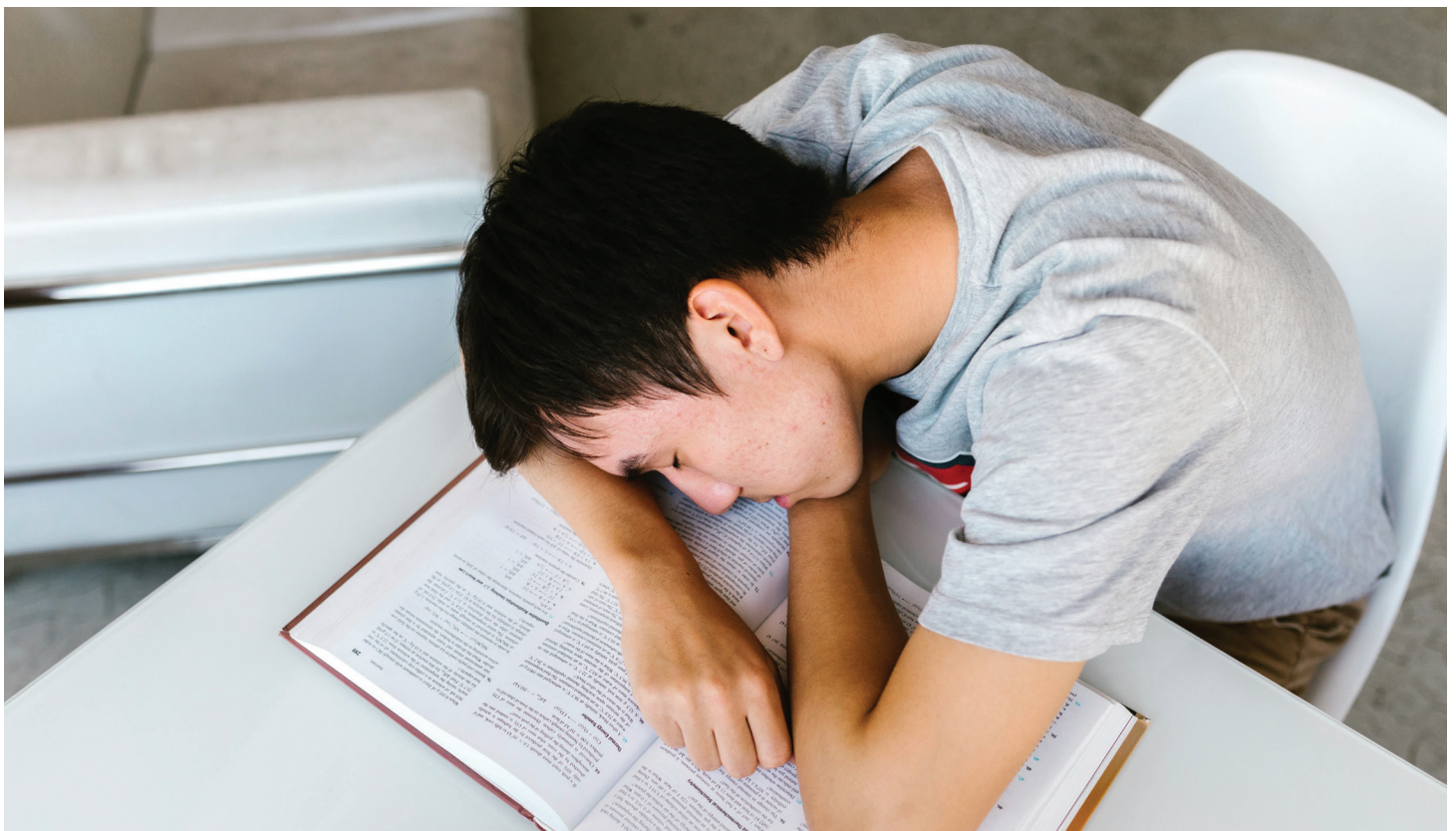
Good sleep habits are vital particularly for children. Consistency is very important with regards to embedding good sleep habits in young people in order for them to flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

The sleep foundation recommends the implementation of a consistent sleep routine that prepares a child's body and mind for sleep. The use of artificial light, or blue light as it is often referred to, suppresses melatonin production, disrupting the circadian rhythm, and potentially reducing sleep quality. This can lead to difficulty falling asleep, reduced sleep duration, and overall poorer sleep quality. This can have a hugely detrimental effect on the ability of a child to achieve crucial high quality sleep which in turn can have a negative impact on their academic performance, social interactions and concentration.

Agreement

We the parents/guardians of pupils attending Ennis National School agree to the following

1. Set a time at which devices are turned off/turned in, so that children can wind down before bed time.
2. Children should have a set bedtime (as regularly as possible) bedtime and sleep time are two different things, there should be a time for lights out.
3. Model good practice when it comes to your own device usage at night time.



Online

Security and Privacy

Online security and privacy have never been more important with the range of services that people are availing of online is continually expanding. From weekly grocery shopping and purchasing items online to managing household bills and banking we are becoming more and more reliant on the internet to handle the important aspects of our lives. In order to teach our children about the importance of security and privacy online we need to discuss the privacy and security setting with our children. We need to highlight questions such as “what are the terms and conditions of using a particular platform?” “What are the community guidelines?” “How do I report an issue that may arise?” “How do I block a particular user or site?”

Regular discussions around privacy settings and security is advisable. Co-Ownning devices is an excellent way to remove some of the pressures that children feel when it comes to security and privacy online.

Agreement

As parents/guardians of pupils attending Ennis National School we agree to the following;

1. To know my/our child's password/s, discuss password protection and make sure they are not shared with friends and are changed regularly.
2. Not permit my child to bring a device to school that has the ability to record information on
3. Instruct my child to switch off any devices that they may have to bring with them to school (these devices can be switched on after school hours)



Parental Controls and **Setting Limits**

- Parental controls can help keep children and young people safer online by preventing access to harmful content, managing screen time, time spent online and who your child communicates with.
- To be most effective, parental controls need to be set up on all devices your child accesses. They should be revisited and maintained regularly. It is also important controls are set on devices your child may access while in the care of others (family, friends).
- Parental controls are most effective when used alongside supervision and other online safety strategies.

Agreement

As parents/guardians of pupils in Ennis National School we agree to the following;

1. Block users from accessing specific websites, apps or functions - for example, the possibility to make payments and buy things, or to use webcams.
2. Filter different types of content — such as inappropriate, 'adult' content, specific social media pages, pages promoting content such as self-harm, eating disorders, violence, drugs, gambling, racism.



Resources for

Parents

Parental Controls

1. Parental Controls for Nintendo <https://nintendo.com/us/mobile-apps/parental-controls>
2. Parental Controls for PlayStation (PS4) <https://www.playstation.com/en-ie/parental-controls/>
3. Parental Controls for Xbox <https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/family-hub>
4. Google <https://families.google/familylink/>
5. Apple <https://support.apple.com/en-ie/108806/>

Game Rating resources

- Pan European Game Information (PEGI) Website <https://pegi.info/>
- Common Sense Media <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Appendix 2: Resources for parents: Social Networking Sites & Chatting Apps

Social Networking	Chatting Apps
Facebook Privacy Settings & Help Centre https://www.facebook.com/help/325807937506242	Snapchat Privacy Settings https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/privacysettings
Instagram Privacy Settings & Information https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501	Viber Privacy Settings (Android) https://help.viber.com/hc/en-us/articles/8908987728413-Personal-data-privacy-settings-on-Rakuten-Viber
YouTube Kids Parental Guide https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6172308?hl=en	WhatsApp Privacy Settings (Android) https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/android/23225461/?category=5245250
YouTube Restricted Mode https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/174084?sjid=11889772166244822847-EU	WhatsApp Privacy Settings (Apple) https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/iphone/28041111/?category=5245250

Reporting

Report Links	Support for Children
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Irish Internet Hotline https://www.hotline.ie/2. Report on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/help/263149623790594/?helpref=search&query=reporting3. Report on Instagram https://help.instagram.com/1658287268947704. Report on Snapchat https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-us/articles/7012332110996-About-Reporting-Infringement-on-Snapchat5. Report on Musical.ly https://support.musical.ly/knowledgebase/report-inappropriate-content/6. Report on Viber https://help.viber.com/hc/en-us/articles/8922694984733-How-to-report-inappropriate-content7. Report on WhatsApp https://faq.whatsapp.com/sv/general/211972448. Report on Xbox https://www.xbox.com/en-US/live/abuse/9. Report on PlayStation https://support.us.playstation.com/articles/en_US/KC_Article/Report-Inappropriate-or-Abusive-Users10. Report on Nintendo https://www.nintendo.com/consumer/index.jsp11. Report on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/policies/#community-guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ISPPC Child Line (for young children under 18 years) https://www.childline.ie/• Barnardos Cyberbullying Support https://www.barnardos.ie/resources-advice/where-to-help/directory-ofservices.html/#cyberbullying <div data-bbox="840 602 1555 693"><h3>Support for Parents</h3></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Office for Internet Safety http://www.internetsafety.ie/en/is/pages/home2. An Garda Síochána Cyber Crime Information https://www.garda.ie/en/Crime/Cyber-crime/3. National Parents Council Primary Helpline http://www.npc.ie/support.aspx?contentid=574. Parent Line: Guiding Parents, Supporting Families http://www.parentline.ie5. Tackle Bullying Parents Forum: http://tacklebullying.ie/parents-forum/



Additional Materials for Parents

The Tablet Project	American Academy of Paediatrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daily touchscreen use in infants and toddlers is associated with reduced sleep and delayed sleep onset https://www.nature.com/articles/srep46104 2. Toddlers' Fine Motor Milestone achievement is associated with early touchscreen Scrolling https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01108/full 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media and Young Minds http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2591 2. Media Use in school-Aged Children and Adolescents http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2592 Children and 3. Adolescents and Digital Media http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2593 4. Adolescent Sleep and the Impact of Technology Use before Sleep on Daytime Function https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5026973/ 5. Technology Trumping Sleep: Impact of Electronic Media and Sleep in Late Adolescent Students https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1125237.pdf

Appendix 3: Security

Two Factor Authentications	Safe Search
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Google Two Factor Authentication https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/185839?hl=en 2. Facebook Login alerts and Two Factor Authentication https://www.facebook.com/help/909243165853369/?helpref=hc_fnav 3. Instagram Two Factor Authentication https://help.instagram.com/566810106808145 4. Snapchat Two Factor Authentication https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/enablelogin-verification 5. Apple ID Two Factor Authentication https://support.apple.com/en-ie/HT204915 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Google Safe Search https://support.google.com/websearch/answer/510?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en
	<h3>Safe Search Kids</h3>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.safesearchkids.com/
	<h3>Safety Advice</h3>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety advice from Google https://www.google.com/safetycenter/tools/ • Safety advice from Webwise https://www.webwise.ie/category/parents/advice/
<h3>Anti Virus</h3>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avast Free Anti-Virus Protection https://support.avast.com/en-eu/article/ActivateFree-Antivirus • AVG Free Anti-Virus Protection (Mac) https://www.avg.com/en-ww/homepage#mac • AVG Free Anti-Virus Protection (PC) https://www.avg.com/en-ww/free-antivirusdownload • Norton Security (Paid) https://www.nortonsecurityonline.com/ns-ir/ 	



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Ennis National School Internet and Technology Use Agreement

I/We (Parents/Guardians Print Name)

together with my/our child/children (Child Print Name & Class)

agree to the recommendations set out in the Ennis National School Internet & Technology Use Agreement, and I/We will implement these recommendations in our use of technology at home. Signed: Parents/Guardians

Signed: Child/Children

The focus of this agreement for year 1 is on

- The Age of First Device
- Improving Sleep Habits

Please return this page, signed by parents/guardians and child/children to the School Once received the School will return a stamped copy to Parents/Guardians