Acceptable Usage Policy for the Internet
St. Marys N.S, Knockbridge

The main goals of this Policy are:
- To educate students, parents and teachers about the potential of the Internet as a valuable learning resource.
- To define the parameters of behaviour and specify the consequences of violating those parameters,
- To identify the school strategy on promoting the safe use of the Internet and address the risks associated with its use
- To ensure that Electronic Digital Communications which include internet and email usage, are properly, meaningfully, and efficiently used, and that St. Mary's NS is protected from problems such as error, fraud, defamation, breach of copyright, unlawful discrimination, illegal activity, privacy violations and service interruptions.

This policy governs the use of all electronic and digital communications (excluding telephones), and includes but is not limited to:

- Web browsing and publishing on the Internet
- Electronic mail ('Email')
- Electronic bulletin/notice boards
- Electronic discussion/news groups
- File transfer
- Video conferencing
- Streaming media
- Instant messaging, and 'Chat' facilities
- School website
- Facebook

Internet access in school:

Providing access to the internet in school will raise educational standards and support the professional work of staff. Children in all classes will have supervised access to web-sites worldwide offering educational resources, news and current events.

In addition, staff will have the opportunity to access educational materials and good curriculum practice, to communicate with the advisory and support services, professional associations and colleagues; exchange curriculum and administration data and receive up-to-date information and business administration systems.

All staff involved in supervising children accessing the internet, will be provided with the schools Acceptable Usage Policy for the Internet. Parents' attention will be drawn to the Policy through the school website and on upon enrolment.

Ensuring internet access is appropriate and safe

The broadband service in school is funded and supplied by the Dept of Education and Science through the NCTE. The filtering of the internet is set at source by the NCTE and can be modified on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is the highest level of filtering. The school's current filtration level is set at 3 which allows the use of YouTube and Twitter but prohibits access to social networking sites such as Facebook and Snapchat. As a result of this, the pupils in school are unlikely to see inappropriate content but the school

staff will take every practical measure in order to maximise learning opportunities and also to ensure that children do not encounter upsetting, offensive or otherwise inappropriate material on the internet. These strategies are as follows:

General
- Our broadband access is provided by the NCTE and all content is filtered from the NCTE filtering options.
- The BOM will provide annual funding to purchase suitable anti-virus protection software to be installed on all pcs and laptops accessed by students.
- 'Kiddle' by Google will be the default search engine on all pcs and laptops accessed by students
- Additional filtration settings on search engines such as 'Safe Search' on Google may be set up to block explicit and inappropriate search results.
- Computer sessions, the interactive whiteboards, will always be supervised by an adult (usually the class teacher).
- Staff will check that the sites pre-selected for pupil use are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils.
- Pupils will be taught to use the internet responsibly in order to reduce the risk to themselves and others.
- Staff will be particularly vigilant when pupils are undertaking their own search and will check that the children are following the agreed search plan.
- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate material will be reviewed in consultation with colleagues from other schools and advice from other bodies such as the NCTE.
- The school will regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal disks, CD-ROMs and memory sticks in school requires a teacher's permission.
- Students and staff will observe good "netiquette" (i.e., etiquette on the Internet) at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

A most important element of our *Rules of Responsible Internet Use (Appendix A)* is that pupils will be taught to tell a teacher immediately if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Using the internet to enhance learning

Pupils will learn how to use a web browser. Older pupils will be taught to use suitable web search engines. Staff and pupils will begin to use the internet to find and evaluate information. Access to the internet will become a planned part of the curriculum that will enrich and extend learning activities and will be integrated into the class schemes of work. As in other areas of their work, we recognise that pupils learn most effectively when they are given clear objectives for internet use.

Different ways of accessing information from the internet will be used depending upon the nature of the material being accessed and the age of the pupils:

- access to the internet may be by teacher demonstration
- pupils may access teacher-prepared materials, rather than the open internet
- pupils may be given a suitable web page or younger children may be provided with a single web site to access
- pupils may be supplied with lists of relevant and suitable web sites which they may access
- older, more experienced, pupils may be allowed to undertake their own internet search having agreed a search plan with their teacher

- pupils will be expected to observe the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and will be informed that checks can and will be made on files held on the system and the sites they access.

Pupils accessing the internet will be supervised by an adult, normally their teacher, at all times. They will only be allowed to use the internet once they have been taught the Rules of Responsible Internet Use and the reasons for these rules. Teachers will endeavour to ensure that these rules remain uppermost in the children's minds as they monitor the children using the internet.

World Wide Web
- Students will never attempt to visit Internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Students will be made aware that all usage, including distributing or receiving information, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Use of a webcam may only be used under supervision of a teacher and also must be in relation to ongoing projects e.g. link-ups with partner schools in an ongoing Comenius project

Using e-mail
Pupils will learn how to use an e-mail application

- Pupils may send e-mail as part of planned lessons but will not be given individual e-mail accounts.
- Pupils may send e-mails as part of a school link with another school or educational establishment.
- Students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- The use of email for sending 'junk mail', for-profit messages, or chain letters is strictly prohibited.

Internet Chat
Pupils will not use Internet Chat Rooms.

St. Mary's N.S. Website-www.knockbridgens.com
Our school web site is intended to:
- provide accurate, up-to-date information about our school.
- act as a link between the partners in education.
- promote the school.
- enable pupils to publish work to a high standard, for a very wide audience including fellow pupils, parents, staff, members of the local community and others.
- celebrate good work.
- photos of pupils may be included but full names or addresses will never be used.
- the school web site is administerd by Mr. McDonnell

Facebook - Knockbridge School

The school's Facebook page will be used by the school as a tool to provide *parents* with current information, on events and activities going on in the day to day life of the school. It is not accessible in school due to the NCTE filtering system and it should be noted by parents that the age limit for use of Facebook is 13 yrears of age.

The School Facebook page will be used to:

- Communicate quickly with the parent body and wider school community
- Alert parents of news and important information at the touch of a button
- Provide parents with pictures/videos of the various activities that take place in school on a weekly basis
- It will be a public page and as such will be open to others to view
- Parents/guardians will have the option to opt in or out of permitting their child's image being posted
- Pupils' names will not be included and children will only be referred to in a group.
- Any negative comments will be deleted
- Parents should not use the Facebook page to contact the school regarding a child's educational or social well-being, but rather follow normal procedures and protocol by making an appointment through the office.
- The Facebook page will be administered by school staff only.

Sanctions

The normal school rules will apply. Misuse of the Internet may result in disciplinary action as per the school's Code of Discipline including verbal and written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management of St. Mary's NS, Knockbridge on

Date: **14-12-2016**

Signed on behalf of the Board by:

Chairperson: _____   Date: _____

Principal: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX A: Rules for Responsible Internet Use

The school has installed computers with internet access to help our IT Education.

Using the computers:

- Pupils may access the internet through PCs, laptops, Ipads and other portable devices in their classrooms and in Seomra Bríde (PC Lab).
- Pupils will not consume food or drink at any time while working on the computer
- Pupils will only access the computer system under the supervision of their teacher
- Pupils will not access other people's files
- Pupils will only bring in CD ROMS's or other computer data storage devices from outside school and use them on the school computers with the consent of a teacher in the school.

Using the internet:

- Pupils will ask permission from a teacher before using the internet
- Pupils will report any unpleasant or inappropriate material to their teacher immediately to protect themselves and other pupils
- Pupils understand that the school may check computer files and may monitor the internet sites visited
- Pupils will not complete or send forms without permission from their teacher
- Pupils will not disclose any personal information when using the Internet.
- Pupils will not download any software from the Internet without permission from their teacher
- Pupils will not at any time take part in Chat Rooms.
- Pupils will never organise a face to face meeting with someone using email, Internet or chat rooms.

APPENDIX B: Parental/Guardian Consent Form (to be completed on enrolment)

I/we, _____as parents/guardians of_____,

give consent to St. Mary's N.S., Knockbridge, to the use photographic images of

_____ in publicity material relating to the school.

I/we understand that photographs/images may be used by the school for distribution to national/local press, school website and/or internal publications/blogs and Facebook. This consent will be held for duration of my child's tenure in St. Mary's N.S., Knockbridge.
We note that personal pupil information including home addresses and contact details will be omitted and Christian names only, will be posted on the internet.

Signed: _____

Date: _____