Grangemockler N.S.

Online Safety Policy (2026)

Introduction

The internet and digital technologies are powerful tools for learning, creativity, and communication. At Grangemockler NS, we recognise both the opportunities and the risks of online engagement. This policy sets out how we keep our pupils safe online, promote responsible digital citizenship, and respond to online safety concerns.

This policy works alongside:

- The ICT Policy
- The Digital Learning Plan
- The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- The Anti-Bullying Policy
- The Child Safeguarding Statement
- The Data Protection/GDPR Policy

Rationale

We require an Online Safety Policy to:

- Protect children from harmful or inappropriate online content.
- Support the development of positive digital literacy and citizenship skills.
- Promote safe use of technology for learning and communication.
- Ensure compliance with Child Protection Procedures (2025) and Children First (2015).
- Support parents/guardians in guiding their children's online behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils, staff, parents/guardians, and visitors to the school.
- All devices used in school (school-owned and personal).
- All online activities linked to teaching, learning, and school communication.

Aims & Objectives

- To teach pupils how to use the internet and digital tools safely and respectfully.

- To raise awareness of the risks associated with online activity (cyberbullying, privacy, scams, inappropriate content).
- To encourage responsible communication and respect for others in online spaces.
- To support staff in embedding online safety across the curriculum.
- To ensure the school community knows how to respond to online safety concerns.

Online Safety Education

Online safety will be taught explicitly through:

- SPHE & RSE (Respectful online communication, cyberbullying awareness).
- Literacy & Digital Learning (critical thinking, spotting misinformation).
- Webwise resources such as *HTML Heroes* (3rd–6th class) and *MySelfie* (5th/6th class).
- Safer Internet Day activities each February.

Pupils will learn to:

- Protect their personal information.
- Think critically before sharing online.
- Report anything that makes them uncomfortable.
- Treat others with respect online.

Roles & Responsibilities

Board of Management

- Oversees implementation of online safety measures.
- Reviews policy regularly.

Principal & ICT Co-ordinator

- Ensures filtering/monitoring systems are in place.
- Organises training for staff and information sessions for parents.
- Manages reports of online safety incidents.

Teachers

- Embed online safety across teaching.
- Supervise internet use in class.
- Model positive digital behaviour.

Parents/Guardians

- Monitor children's use of devices at home.
- Encourage responsible online behaviour.
- Report any concerns to the school.

Pupils

- Follow the AUP and online safety rules.
- Respect others online.
- Report concerns to a trusted adult.

Technical Measures

- The school uses the Schools Broadband Programme for filtering and firewall protection.
- Devices are protected with up-to-date anti-virus software.
- Pupils only access the internet under teacher supervision.
- Approved platforms (e.g., Google Workspace, Seesaw) are used for learning.
- Staff accounts are password protected; pupils use restricted accounts.

Managing Risks & Responding to Incidents

If a pupil is exposed to harmful or upsetting online content:

- The teacher will respond immediately and provide reassurance.
- The incident will be recorded and reported to the Principal.
- Parents/guardians will be informed.
- The school will work with outside agencies if necessary (Tusla, Gardaí, Webwise, Hotline.ie).

In cases of cyberbullying, the school's Anti-Bullying Policy will apply.

Social Media & Digital Communication

- Pupils are not permitted to access social media during school hours.
- Staff will not connect with pupils on personal social media accounts.
- Any school-related online communication must use official school channels.
- Parents are asked not to post photographs of other pupils online without consent.

School Website & Online Content

- Parental consent is sought for publishing pupil work/photos.
- Children will not be identified by full name in photos or online work.
- Group photos will be prioritised over individual photos.
- The school email will be used for all online contact, monitored by staff.

Training & Support

- Staff will receive CPD on digital literacy and online safety.
- Parents will be invited to information evenings (in partnership with Webwise).
- Pupils will engage in ongoing lessons and awareness activities.

Sanctions

Breaches of the Online Safety Policy may result in:

- Withdrawal of internet/digital privileges.
- Written warnings to parents.
- Disciplinary procedures under the Code of Behaviour.
- In serious cases, referral to outside authorities.

Review & Communication

This policy will be:

- Reviewed every two years (or sooner if required).

- Made available to staff, parents, and pupils via the school website and office.
- Discussed with parents at enrolment and with pupils as part of class teaching.

Ratification

This Online Safety Policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Grangemockler NS on:

11/2/2026

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Signed: Vera Power (Teacher Responsible)

Review date: December 2028