

Nicker National School Internet Policy

Introduction and Rationale

This policy has been formulated by the Board of Management in consultation with staff, pupils and parents. It aims to ensure that all members of the school community cooperate to allow the safe and effective use of the internet as a learning tool and a means of communication to enhance the educational experience of all pupils. In conjunction with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Health and Safety Statement and Acceptable Use Policy, this policy aims to put in place robust measures to combat cyber bullying against any member of the school community.

Pupil access to the Internet

Internet access is available in all classrooms in Nicker NS. The school is pleased to offer access to the internet as a tool, a resource for both pupils and teachers, for reference purposes and for researching project materials. Pupils need access to thousands of libraries and databases on various subjects, providing a wide variety of information which may be new to the children but relevant to their learning needs, interests and experiences. Electronic information research skills are now fundamental to preparation for living and working in contemporary society. The school will integrate such information as appropriate within the curriculum, and staff will provide guidance and instruction to pupils in the appropriate use of such resources.

Email: Electronic mail (email), allows pupils to communicate with peers and educationalists around the world. Pupils may send and receive emails during supervised sessions if the class teacher chooses. Personal information about the child will not be disclosed without permission from the teacher supervising the session. Email messages which make the pupil uncomfortable, must be reported to the teacher and principal. The allocation of personal email addresses to individual pupils is not allowed.

World Wide Web: Access to on-line resources will enable pupils to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards throughout the world. The school believes that the benefits to pupils from access to information resources and increased opportunities for collaboration exceed the

disadvantages. Pupils will not be given access to the Internet without teacher supervision. The school uses filtering software which greatly reduces the risk of deliberate or inadvertent access to undesirable material i.e. expletive words, pictures, or unsuitable content. Teachers and computer technicians hired by the school will regularly check the computer logs of all information accessed by pupils as well as the maintenance of all IT equipment.

Recording and Sharing images and audio

Children will use school recording equipment strictly under teacher direction and supervision, for educational reasons only. Children will not take photos, or make audio or video recordings of anyone without the teacher's direction and supervision. Any recordings made will be treated strictly in accordance with Data Protection guidelines and shared only in accordance with parental consent.

In the interests of pupil privacy, it is requested that family members/friends present at school events would not take photos or make recordings of other children or share these on any platform.

School Website: Pupils may create projects, artwork or writing which would be suitable for publication on the school website. The work will appear in an educational context on web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without expressed written permission. Permission slips are sent from the school seeking permission for children's work or photographs to be uploaded and used in various educational contexts. Particular care will be taken where photographs of pupils are being used on the school website, or any other context. Personal pupil information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.

Home-School Communication Currently, e mail is used as a means of communication with parents. Social media may be used as a means of communication the activities and achievements of the school. As dictated by each individual case, negative comments about the school community, on social media, come under the school's procedures in relation to cyber bullying, as outlined here and in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

The Effects of Cyberbullying The effects of cyberbullying mirror the effects of bullying carried out in person, including stress, anxiety, low self esteem, changes in interests, and depression. Cyberbullying can also have more serious effects on wellbeing. Because of how and where it occurs – on the internet, victims are subjected to cyberbullying at all times when they are online, including in their home. Cyberbullying can be difficult to combat as a school, bullies can reach others in the one place they expect to be safe, and can also lead a victim to feel that the bullying is inescapable. Cyberbullying tends to be more extreme. Often, people will say things online that they wouldn't say in person. Cyberbullying also allows the message to be much more farreaching. In just a few clicks, a photo or post can be shared all over a website. In the most extreme of cases, cyberbullying can contribute to feelings of suicide and self harm.

Responding to Cyberbullying Our school already deals with bullying through anti-bullying policies and procedures, but in dealing with cyberbullying, the following additional procedures will be put in place;

Support: Providing the person being bullied with support and reassurance.

Encouraging the victim to get help from parents, principal or teachers.

Evidence: Helping the victim to keep relevant evidence for investigations. This can be done by taking screen shots or printing webpages.

Inform: Giving advice to make sure it does not happen again. This can include changing passwords, contact details, blocking profiles on social networking sites or reporting abuse online. It may also involve discussing the matter with the Board of Management to discuss how it may be prevented from occurring in future.

No Retaliation: Ensuring that the victim does not retaliate or reply to the messages.

Privacy: Encouraging the child to keep personal information private on the internet

Investigation: The cyberbullying claim needs to be investigated fully. If the perpetrator is known, ask them to remove offending remarks or posts. All records should be kept as part of the investigation. As outlined above, the

outcome of any such investigation may be notified to the Board of Management.

Report: Abuse on social networking sites or through text messaging needs to be reported to the websites and mobile phone service providers.

Preventing Cyberbullying in Schools

Cyberbullying is a whole school community issue, treated as another form of bullying within the school's anti-bullying policy. Nicker N.S. will make sure that members of the school community know that, no matter what its form, all bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated. As part of efforts to deal with the issue, the school will also continue to promote awareness about the school's Acceptable Use Policy and ICT misuse sanctions. Nicker N.S. will make all members of the school community aware of their rights and responsibilities online and ensure they are aware that the internet is not a private place.

School stakeholders will promote the positive use of technology, discuss and educate all members of the school community about good netiquette and personal safety issues. Our school will encourage a "telling" atmosphere – so that everybody within the school community will report cyberbullying where they see it. To do this, our school will publicise different ways of reporting cyberbullying to give confidence to bystanders.

Above all, our school encourages and promotes a positive and supportive atmosphere of co-operation between pupils, parents, staff and Board of Management, which will ensure that cyberbullying does not thrive. All members of the school community will be made aware of the resources available on www.webwise.ie and internet safety talks will be provided to parents so that they can play their own fundamental part in modeling appropriate internet and social media use, hence keeping their children safe online.

Data Protection Act School information and records are dealt with in line with the Data Protection Act 2018