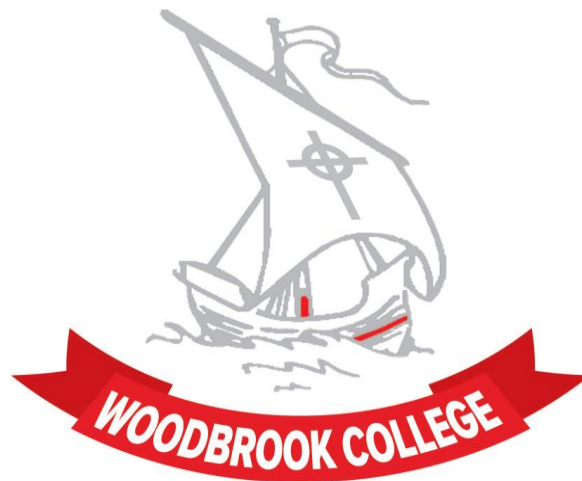# Woodbrook College
Bray, Co. Wicklow

ICT and Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy

"Learning together for a better future"

1.   GENERAL

1.1   Woodbrook College has a catholic tradition reflecting its origin within Edmund Rice School's Trust (ERST) Charter.

1.2   Woodbrook College considers itself a pluralist community; it embraces inclusion in terms of social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity.

1.3   Woodbrook College is a co-educational school with a broad curriculum, which aims to meet the diverse range of academic, vocational, spiritual and social needs of its students.

2.   INTRODUCTION

2.1   Woodbrook College believes that it is important to ensure that everyone is familiar with the IT and phone acceptable usage policy

2.2   The cost of IT for the school is a considerable one and therefore it is essential that the whole school community ensure that every effort is taken to prolong the life of all services and equipment.

2.3   Mobile Phones have become an important and permanent feature of everyday life. However, if not properly regulated they can also have a disruptive effect on classroom teaching and learning. There are also inherent dangers associated with the misuse of mobile phones and staff and students must be protected from any invasion of privacy or harassment associated with such misuse.

2.4   The use of Information and Communications Technology (hereafter "ICT"), iPads, social media, mobile phones and other devices is now a feature of modern society and such technology is integral to the lives of most of our pupils. Woodbrook College uses instructional technology as one method of teaching and learning and, in order to support our students in becoming proficient in the competencies essential for success in a 21st Century learning environment, the School facilitates a variety of resources alongside the curriculum.

2.5   However, the School's classes and activities need to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. It is incumbent on all members of the Woodbrook College community to use technology responsibly, ethically and respectfully of others. Internet(ICT) use and permission to use mobile phone are considered a privilege rather than a right, and this policy has been drawn up to ensure that modern technologies are used appropriately.

2.6   Increasing sophistication of technology presents a number of issues for the School including:
The high value of many smart watches, phones and devices.
- Integration of cameras into phones and iPads leading to child protection, data protection, bullying and teacher harassment issues.
- Potential for text and cyber-bullying.
- Potential to use electronic devices and phones at inappropriate times and for distracting or inappropriate uses.
Potential for disruption to classes. Even when silent, the use of mobile phones for communication purposes undermines classroom discipline.

3.   AIMS

3.1   To ensure that all parties/guardians are familiar with the rules associated with the acceptable use of IT and mobile phone

3.2   To outline the sanctions that may occur when breaches of this policy happen. To ensure that students benefit from the learning opportunities offered by iPads and the School's internet resources in a safe and effective manner

3.3   To ensure that all devices are used appropriately; that their use does not disrupt teaching and learning or infringe on the rights of others

3.4   To outline clearly the acceptable use of devices.

3.5   To allow staff to carry out their duties unimpeded and free from harassment.

3.6   To accommodate future needs and changing circumstances

3.7   To promote a safe environment for students

4.	PHONES

4.1   **In-school Activities:** Students are permitted to bring mobile phones to school under the following conditions:

- Phones must be powered off (or on silent) and out of sight while students are on the school grounds. It is not permissible for students to use their mobile phones on school property (including the school yard and fields)
- Phones are the responsibility of the individual student and the Board will accept no responsibility for lost or stolen mobile phones.
- Phones will be confiscated if used inappropriately and the school reserve the right to review the phones contents if there is cause for concern or to investigate a specific claim or complaint.

4.2   **Out-of-school Activities:** Students are permitted to bring mobile phones on school trips and other extracurricular activities. However, phones remain the responsibility of the individual student and the Board will accept no responsibility for lost or stolen phones. Again, phones must be powered off or on silent while the student is engaged in the extra-curricular activity. The same rule applies to out-of-school activity as apply to in-school activity.

4.3   **Misuse:** The following misuse of mobile phones at any time will be considered an extremely serious disciplinary matter:
- Taking or sending of inappropriate images.
- Unauthorised recording of staff or students.
- Using the phone to harass or bully another person.
- Posting images of staff or students on social networking sites, without their express permission.

4.4   **Contact with Home**
- Students who feel unwell and need to go home should not contact parents/guardians by mobile phone. Such contact must be made from the school secretary's office on the school phone, so that the school is aware of any such arrangements.
- Parents/guardians are asked not to arrange to contact students by mobile phone during the school day, an arrangement which necessitates the student breaking the school rule. Any necessary contact can be made with a student by telephoning the school office.

4.5   **Sanctions**
- Mobile phones belonging to students which cause disruption to a class by ringing or being used to transmit or receive messages will be treated as a classroom disciplinary matter and will be dealt with through the normal disciplinary system.
- If a teacher, as part of their classroom disciplinary procedures, decides to confiscate a mobile phone, this phone may be collected by the student from the school office at the end of the following school day. If this is a Friday, then the phone will be returned on the evening of Monday.
- Repeat offenders may have additional sanctions imposed including a longer period of confiscation, a fine or losing the right to bring their mobile phone to school altogether. In these instances, parents/guardians will be informed, and their support sought in the high expectation of positive behaviour.
- The Principal or Deputy Principal will respond appropriately in cases of unauthorised recording or misuse of mobile phones (as outlined earlier) and will have the full range of sanctions – including exclusion – open to them.
    - In such instances, the school authorities reserve the right to view the contents of the phone, in the presence of the student, to ensure that it contains no images or information which would compromise any member of the school community. Any improper photographs/recordings taken in the school

building, on the grounds or during any school activity, inside or outside the school, will be deleted in the presence of the student and their parent/guardian before the phone is returned. The exception to this rule is dependent on the severity of the situation and may warrants the College to retaining the image/footage on the phone or download it to another school held device as part of an ongoing investigation. Any images or footage held will be in accordance with GDPR guidelines.

- Students who have used their phone to make unauthorised recordings or take unauthorised photographs will have their mobile phone confiscated for one week.
- Furthermore, mobile phones may, at the discretion of the Principal, be retained for a longer period if it is believed that images contained therein may assist in the investigation of any related or unrelated incident either by the school authorities or the Gardaí.

4.6 **State Examinations:** Examination students are reminded of the Department of Education and Skills policy on the possession of mobile phones, smart watches and other electronic devices during state examinations.

"A candidate shall not bring into the examination hall, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is in such room:
   a. Any memorandum, notes or mobile phone, electronic address book, data bank, etc, except a calculator as permitted under the regulations."

Failure to comply with these rules could lead to the cancellation of a paper and years of work wasted.

4.7 **Parental/Guardian Support:** Parents/guardians are asked to respect the school rules in relation to the use of mobile phones and to support the school's position in this regard.

4.8 **Use of Mobile Phones by Staff**: Mobile phones should not be used by staff during class time unless expressly for school purposes or for emergency use. Phones should be powered off or on silent during class time.

4.9 **If a device has been used to take photographs/audio or video footage:**
- The device will be confiscated until the matter can be resolved.
- Depending on the nature of the content viewed, the School reserves the right to contact relevant outside bodies (Gardai, legal advice, HSE, Tusla, etc.) to determine the appropriate course of action.
- The sanction applied will depend on a number of factors, including:
   - Where the photographs/audio/video footage was taken.
   - Whether the subject(s) consented to the photographs/audio/video footage being taken.
   - The content of the photographs/audio/video footage.
   - If a teacher is included in the photographs/audio/video footage.
   - If the material was shared with others or posted on social media.

This may result in expulsion, depending on the nature of the incident.

5. ICT

5.1 **Internet Usage:** To ensure that ICT resources are used appropriately, Woodbrook College has established procedures and parameters under which these resources may be used by staff and students.
The aim of these procedures is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's Internet resources in a safe and effective manner. Therefore, if this Acceptable Use Policy is not adhered to, this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions will be imposed. This Acceptable Use Policy should be read carefully to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood.
The School employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Communications via ICT resources are sometimes public in nature. School rules for behaviour apply. It is expected that users will at all times comply with these rules and will act in a responsible, ethical and legal manner at all times. Particular care must be taken when using email and other forms of direct electronic communications. Hacking and other unlawful activities, including any form of cyber-bullying, is strictly prohibited. Users are prohibited from installing personal software to any ICT resource without prior permission from school management.
- It is recommended that parents/guardians use software and/or equivalent systems at home in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. It is also recommended that parents/guardians use the "restrictions" settings on phones that students possess.

- The school may monitor students' Internet usage, this includes looking at their history on the computer they are using.
- The school may monitor students' and staff's school email account usage for adherence to this policy.
- Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.
- Downloading of non-approved software is strictly forbidden, whether downloaded in school or elsewhere.
- Under no circumstance should a memory stick be used to upload anything onto the network.
- Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.

In order to provide an Internet environment that is safe and age-appropriate to students, school management reserves the right to monitor and review the use of ICT resources and will do so as needed to ensure that the systems are being used for educational proposes. It is important that the school community understands this and recognises that monitoring access, among other things:
- increases the safety and security of people and resources by supporting a positive learning and work environment, safe from harassment, intimidation or threats,
- discourages breaches of confidentiality, copyright infringements and inappropriate file downloads and print requests,
- promotes appropriate internet access, electronic communications messages (e.g. blogs and appropriate discussion forums).

Therefore, users must be aware that they should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of these ICT resources. Personal information, however, is not publicly accessible outside of the school network.

5.2 Use of the Internet

- Students will not at any time intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials.
- Students will use the internet for appropriate purposes only.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information of their own or any other person.
- Students or staff must not use their Woodbrook College identity for taking part in any personal activities. A school profile is for use of school business only.
- Downloading materials or images not relevant to students' studies is in direct breach of this Acceptable Use Policy and is strictly forbidden.
- Students will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Teachers will not share their personal details with students, including personal mobile numbers, personal email addresses or social networking personal details. Exchange of assignments, notes, resources etc. may be done through TEAM's or similar virtual learning environments and/or through school email addresses. This is to ensure transparency and protect both students and teachers from any potential harassment, embarrassment, inappropriate allegation or Child Protection issue that could arise in the absence of a monitored communication system.
- Unless explicitly instructed by a teacher to do so, students will not access any social networking websites while in school or during school opening hours. Student access to social networking sites is strictly forbidden while in school or during school opening hours, unless under a teacher's direct supervision and instruction. This access restriction also applies to all other social networking sites in existence at the time of approving this policy, or any new social networking sites that arise before the date of the next review of this policy.

5.3 Email

- Students will use school email accounts.
- Students should not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students should not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, telephone/mobile numbers, email addresses or pictures.
- Students should never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.

- Students should note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Students may only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums, messaging or other electronic communication that have been approved by the school.
- Internet chat rooms, discussion forums and other electronic communication forums will only be used for educational purposes and may only be accessed when supervised by a teacher.
- Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.

5.4 **Sanctions:** Misuse of the internet may result in disciplinary action, including 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. Violations of this policy are deemed as violations of school behavioural expectations and the Relationship and Behaviour Policy.

Anyone who is aware of problems with, or misuse of these ICT resources, or has a question regarding the proper use of same, should discuss this with a member of staff or management. The Woodbrook College Board of Management urges any person who receives a harassing, threatening, intimidating or other improper messages to report it immediately to a member of staff.

5.5 **Social Media:** Woodbrook College reserves the right to investigate and deal with incidents and activities that happen outside school time and which impact on the welfare or education of students of this School.

This often applies in the case of misuse of social media sites which can lead to unfortunate online nastiness or cyber-bullying. Students shall be advised that they need to think carefully about possible serious repercussions of anything they say on the internet as well as the hurt it can cause. The minute anything unpleasant is published online it can be viewed repeatedly and by multiple users and therefore formally constitutes bullying.

Students and Staff should not use their Woodbrook College email address to register for any Social Media services, including but not limited to Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Twitter etc.

Circulating, publishing or distributing on the internet material associated with School activities, including, but not limited to, material in relation to staff and students, where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to the School or another person, is considered a serious breach of School discipline

As part of any disciplinary action, the Board of Management reserves the right to suspend or expel a student where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.

5.6 **Dealing with hurtful comments on the internet:** Reading hurtful or offensive comments on the internet can be very difficult for a student and their parents/guardians.

It is essential in such situations that the student and/or their parent/guardian contact a member of the Woodbrook College staff so that the matter can be addressed. Students and parents/guardian can sometimes feel that drawing attention to a cyber-bullying issue will exacerbate the problem, but our experience is that failing to deal with online nastiness means it will continue and most likely worsen.

The School can offer advice and counselling to students on dealing with upsetting material. Any member of staff should be contacted to arrange this support through our Pastoral Care Team.

There is also excellent advice on the internet. The website **www.webwise.ie**. is an internet safety initiative focused on raising awareness of online safety issues and good practice among students, their parents/guardians and teachers.