

**Céim Eile, Templemore College of Further Education (TCFE)**

**Acceptable Use of Computers & Internet Policy**

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**Acceptable Use of Computers and Internet Policy**

**Rationale**

Templemore College of Further Education provides computing resources for student and staff uses to support the normal activities of the College, in particular for educational, research and administrative purposes.

The purpose of this document is to make users aware of what the College deems to be acceptable and unacceptable usage of the facilities and to provide guidelines for good practice.

Computing resources must not be used for any illegal or unethical purposes and should not be used for recreational or personal use.

As well as providing general rules and regulations, this policy provides specific guidelines in relation to:

Internet Access.

Pornography.

Harassment.

Copyright.

Entering Contracts.

Defamation.

Confidential Information.

Photography or video recording someone without prior permission.

Cyberbullying, through the internet or Mobile phone, often through social networking sites used by Young people.

Those acting in contravention of this Code of Conduct may be subject to the College’s disciplinary procedures and/or criminal proceedings.

***General Procedures and Regulations***

The College provides computing resources to students and staff to facilitate the normal activities of the College, in particular for educational, research and administrative purposes.

Computing resources must not be used for any illegal or unethical purposes and should not be used for recreational or personal use.

The use of computing resources is subject to the regulations and guidelines outlined in this document.

It is the responsibility of the individual to be aware of the regulations and guidelines. Ignorance of the regulations and guidelines is not acceptable as an excuse or defence.

Users must not jeopardise, in any way, the integrity, performance or reliability, of the College’s computing resources. No attempts must be made to circumvent data protection schemes, to uncover security loopholes, to “hack” into systems or to interfere with the intended operation of the computer resources.

Users must take adequate precautions to protect the computing resources of the College from malicious software (e.g. Computer virus programs).

Users must not interfere or attempt to interfere in any way with data belonging to another user. No user should access or make unauthorized copies of data belonging to another user.

Users must not deliberately be wasteful of computing resources or unfairly monopolise resources to the exclusion of others.

Users must not download music or video files.

Users are advised to log off from the network when finished at a workstation.

The College may make regulations from time to time to govern access to computing resources with a view to ensuring that all users have a fair share of resources.

When users are using approved links to external computing facilities, they must abide by the rules and code of conduct of the host organisation.

Users must not eat or drink in the computer rooms in the College

Users must not undertake any actions that would bring the College into disrepute.

***Internet Access***

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that many of these pages include offensive, sexually explicit, material and inappropriate material. In general, it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with this material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive material. Additionally, having an e-mail address on the Internet may lead to receipt of unsolicited e-mail containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk and the College is not responsible for material viewed from the Internet. To minimize these risks, your use of the Internet at Templemore College of Further Education is governed by this Policy.

This Policy has been designed to protect the staff and students of the College.

The Policy explains what the College expects in terms of e-mail and Internet usage.

This Policy states some general rules do’s and don’ts and then identifies six areas (pornography, harassment, copyright, contracts, defamation and confidentiality) where legal or criminal problems may arise. Under each section there is an explanation of the potential problems and some rules to help avoid these problems.

**General Rules**

Keep all your passwords secure. You are responsible for all uses, including illicit use, of e-mail and Internet under your password.

The College’s e-mail system is primarily for business and educational use.

Ask yourself before sending an e-mail, how you would feel if your message were read out in court? E-mail messages may have to be read out in litigation. An e-mail should be regarded as a written formal letter, the recipient of which may be much wider than the sender intends. Even when a message is erased it is still possible to retrieve and read that message.

All business e-mails should be sent under school headings.

Do not impersonate any other person when using e-mail or amend messages received.

Do not import any non-text file, including files received as e-mail attachments, onto your system without first checking them for viruses using the approved software. If you send an e-mail with attachment you must include the following statement in your message: “*we cannot accept any liability for any loss or damage sustained as a result of software viruses. It is your responsibility to carry out such virus checking as is necessary before opening any attachment.”*

Notwithstanding the College’s right to retrieve and read any electronic mail messages, such messages should be treated as confidential by staff and accessed only by the intended recipient. Staff or students are not authorized to retrieve any e-mail messages that are not addressed to them.

Do not deliberately visit, view or download any material from any Web site containing sexual or illegal material which is offensive in any way whatsoever.

If you receive any offensive, unpleasant, harassing or intimidating messages or material via the e-mail at the College, print the message and keep a hard copy and inform the IT department and the Principal without delay.

To prevent computer viruses from infecting the College system do not download any software onto the College system. This includes software and shareware available free on the Internet. Such material may be downloadable through the IT department.

Use of public messaging systems on the Internet should be made only with the written permission of the Principal. Public messaging systems include user groups, special interest forums and bulletin boards.

Templemore College of Further Education website should not be interfered with or changed in any way without prior authorization from the Principal.

Do not allow Internet or e-mail use to interfere with work responsibilities. This includes interfering with classroom time of other staff and students.

Do not visit chat rooms. This is forbidden by the College.

Do not use Windows Messenger or any other instant Messaging Service.

Do not install any software on a College Computer without prior approval from the College IT staff.

Do not store any private or personal information anywhere on the college computer network as it may be in contravention of the Data Protection Act.

***Pornography***

**What is pornography?**

As there can be no legitimate business use for accessing or transmitting sexually explicit materials in College, the question of whether or not sexual material constitutes pornography is not relevant to use of the College’s e-mail and Internet access.

**What you must not do**

Do not access or transmit any material with a sexual content.

**What you must do**

If you accidentally open a web site then you should switch off the monitor, **not** the computer and call the tutor in the room or someone in the IT department. The system records all activity and as it will be monitored it is necessary to report in advance to eliminate further enquiries.

**What are the consequences of not following this Policy**

The display on screen of sexual matter or transmitting of such material to other people may constitute sexual harassment (see the harassment section Policy). Accessing and transmitting sexual material may be a criminal offence for which both you and the College may be liable. The Gardai or other appropriate authority will be informed.

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including possible exclusion.

NB To download or send pornography or to deliberately view pornography which involves and image of a child or what appears to be an image of a child may be a criminal offence.

***Harassment***

It is the Policy of the College that all staff and students must be allowed to work in an environment free from harassment of any kind. This includes (but is not limited to) sexual harassment, or harassment on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, politics, disability, race or victimization.

**What is harassment?**

“Sexual Harassment” takes place where a person:

Subjects another person (“the victim”) to an act of physical intimacy, or

Requests sexual favours from the victim, or

Subjects the victim to any act or conduct with sexual connotations, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, picture or other material

*where:*

the act, request or conduct is unwelcome to the victim, and

could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating, or

the victim is treated differently by reason of his or her rejection of or submission to the act, request or conduct, or it could reasonably be anticipated that the victim be so treated

In the context of this Policy this includes sending messages with sexually suggestive material, repeated sexual propositions or abuse of a sexual nature.

“Harassment” occurs where a person subjects another person (“the victim”) to any unwelcome act, request or conduct, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, which could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her.

**What you must not do**

Do not send abusive messages or messages which contain offensive material.

**What are the consequences of not following this Policy?**

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including possible exclusion.

In addition, harassment is a criminal offence for which the harasser can be imprisoned. Victims of harassment may also be able to claim damages from the harasser and the College.

***Copyright***

**What is copyright?**

The owner of the copyright has the exclusive rights in certain works such as documents, articles, books, plays, films, recordings and musical compositions, so that they cannot be copied or used in certain ways without the consent of the copyright owner.

**What you must not do**

Do not download, copy or transmit to third parties the works of others without their permission as this may infringe copyright. Copyright is most likely to be breached when you download material from the Internet or when you copy text or attach it to an e-mail message.

**What are the consequences of not following this Policy?**

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including possible exclusion. In addition you or the College can be sued by the owner of the copyright for damages for unauthorised use of the copyright material.

***Entering Contracts***

**What is a contract?**

A contract is an agreement between two or more parties to create legal obligations between them. Contracts can be made orally or in writing. Binding contracts can be formed by e-mail.

E-mail may appear informal but you must take care not to enter into contractual obligations without the usual care and attention to detail to protect the interests of the College.

**What you must not do**

You must not enter into any contract that hasn’t been approved by the Principal. You may not download any software except with the prior approval of the IT department.

**What are the consequences of not following this Policy?**

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including possible exclusion.

***Defamation***

*What is defamation?*

Defamation is the publication of a statement which adversely affects the reputation of a person or the College. Publication may be by way of the Internet or e-mail.

**What you must not do**

Do not send or circulate, internally or externally, any information which is defamatory. In particular, you must not send or circulate, internally or externally, any information which contains negative comments about an individual, organisation or business without first checking that the information is accurate.

**What are the consequences of not following this Policy?**

A person, organisation or business defamed may sue you or the College for damages. There is a defence that the information was “true” but the onus would be on you or the College to show that. Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including possible exclusion.

***Confidential information***

**What is confidential information?**

In general terms, confidential information includes any information which is not available to the general public.

**What you must not do**

Do not send any documents of a confidential nature by e-mail except where they are encrypted and where you are authorised to do so by the IT co-ordinator. All such messages should have the following statement included in non-encrypted text:

“*this message is confidential and intended for the addressee. No other person is authorized to decrypt this message and unauthorized decryption is prohibited and may be unlawful. Unauthorised decryption will not waive privilege or confidentiality*”

E-mails containing information that is in anyway sensitive or confidential must include the following statement:

“*the information included in this e-mail is of a confidential nature and is intended only for the addressee. If you are not the intended addressee, any disclosure, copying or distribution by you is prohibited and may be unlawful. Disclosure to any party other than the addressee, whether inadvertent or otherwise is not intended to waive privilege or confidentiality.”*

**What are the consequences of not following this Policy?**

Failure to comply with this Policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, including possible exclusion.

***Amendments***

The Board of Management of the College may amend this Policy at any time.

***Relevant Legislation***

Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000

Criminal Damages Act 1999

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

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| Submitted to Staff: |  |
| Submitted to Board of Management: |  |
| Submitted to ETB Board: |  |