



Bandonbridge National School

**HOME USE OF SCHOOL-OWNED
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Pupils and Parents/Guardians

Ratified by Board of Management	27 April 2021
Policy review/redraft	September 2026

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the arrangements governing the home use of assistive technology (AT) and related equipment that is owned by Bandonbridge N.S. and assigned to an individual pupil for educational purposes. It should be read together with the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Data Protection/Privacy policies, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, Code of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta Policy.

The policy is based on Department of Education Circular 0010/2013, which remains the stated basis of the Department's Assistive Technology Grant scheme. The scheme provides funding for essential specialist equipment recommended through the NCSE process where a pupil's needs cannot be met adequately through existing school provision.

2. Purpose and Rationale

The purposes of this policy are to:

- support a pupil's access to the curriculum and agreed school-related learning at home where home use is educationally appropriate;
- clarify ownership, responsibility, supervision, safe custody, security and acceptable use of school-owned equipment;
- protect the pupil, the school, school information and personal data when equipment is used away from school premises;
- provide a clear procedure for issuing, returning, maintaining, repairing, transferring or withdrawing equipment; and
- ensure that home use is consistent with Department/NCSE requirements and the school's wider digital-learning and safeguarding policies.

3. Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Framework

This policy has been reviewed with regard to the following legislation, Department guidance and regulatory requirements, as applicable and as amended:

- Department of Education Circular 0010/2013 - Scheme of Grants towards the Purchase of Essential Assistive Technology Equipment for Pupils with Physical or Communicative Disabilities, and the current Department Assistive Technology Grant information;
- Education Act 1998;
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN), noting that relevant provisions apply as commenced;
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000;
- General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018;
- Children First Act 2015 and current Children First / Department child-protection procedures applicable to primary schools;
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000, as amended;
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, where relevant to online communications and image-sharing; and
- Data Protection Commission guidance for schools, including the Data Protection Toolkit for Schools.

Where Department or NCSE requirements are updated, the school will apply the current requirements and will review this policy as necessary.

4. Core Principles

- Assistive technology is provided to support identified educational need and access to learning; it is not a general-purpose family device.

- Equipment funded or purchased for a pupil normally remains the property of the school, subject to Department rules on transfer or reallocation.
- Home use is permitted only with the approval of the Board of Management or its authorised school management arrangements.
- The best interests, dignity, safety, privacy and evolving capacity of the pupil will inform decisions about use and supervision.
- Only the minimum personal data necessary for the educational purpose should be stored or processed on the device.

5. Approval for Home Use

Before school-owned assistive technology is taken home:

1. the class teacher and/or special education teacher will discuss the educational purpose and practical arrangements with the parent/guardian;
2. the school will confirm that home use is appropriate to the pupil's needs and consistent with any relevant professional recommendation or NCSE/Department sanction;
3. the parent/guardian and pupil will be given this policy and the Home Use Agreement and will sign the agreement before the equipment leaves the school;
4. the school will record the make/model, serial or asset number, condition, installed software/apps and accompanying accessories; and
5. where necessary, the school will provide age-appropriate guidance to the pupil and parent/guardian on safe use, security, charging, storage and return arrangements.

6. Ownership and Transfer

All approved equipment remains the property of Bandonbridge N.S. unless the Department or another lawful authority directs otherwise. The school retains responsibility for the management of the asset and may recall it for inspection, maintenance, repair, reconfiguration, reallocation or other legitimate school purposes.

If the pupil transfers to another school, including post-primary school, Bandonbridge N.S. will consult the relevant SENO and/or Visiting Teacher, as appropriate, regarding transfer of specialist equipment where it remains suitable for the pupil's assessed needs. Any transfer or reallocation will be managed in accordance with current Department/NCSE arrangements.

7. Conditions of Home Use

6. The equipment may be used only by the pupil to whom it has been assigned, except where a staff member, parent/guardian or authorised technician needs access for supervision, support, maintenance or repair.
7. Use must be for school-assigned, agreed educational activities and for the assistive functions for which the device has been provided.
8. Only school-approved software, applications, accounts, cloud services and peripherals may be installed or used. Pupils/parents must not bypass filtering, security, device-management or access controls.
9. The pupil and parent/guardian must take reasonable care of the equipment. It must be transported in its protective case, kept dry, handled carefully and stored securely when not in use.
10. The device must not be left unattended in a public place or in plain view in an unattended vehicle. Where unavoidable during transport, it should be secured out of sight in a locked vehicle.
11. Cables, chargers and accessories must be used safely and stored with the device. No unauthorised repair, modification, engraving, removal of asset labels or hardware alteration is permitted.
12. The parent/guardian will provide reasonable supervision appropriate to the pupil's age and needs, particularly for internet use, communications, downloads and access to online services.

13. The school's AUP applies to home use. Prohibited activity includes cyberbullying; accessing, creating, storing or sharing illegal, harmful or age-inappropriate material; unauthorised access; plagiarism or misrepresentation of work; and misuse of generative AI contrary to school rules.
14. The pupil must not use the device to photograph, record, upload or share images, audio, video or personal information about another person without an appropriate educational purpose and required permission.
15. School information and personal data must be kept secure. Passwords/passcodes must not be shared unnecessarily. Personal accounts should not be added unless expressly approved by the school.
16. The device must be returned at the times agreed with the school and immediately when requested. The school may set individual return arrangements rather than a fixed weekly schedule where this better meets the pupil's educational needs.
17. Home use may be suspended or withdrawn where the agreement is breached, where use creates a safeguarding, data-protection or security concern, or where the equipment is no longer required for the agreed educational purpose.

8. Data Protection, Privacy and Cybersecurity

Bandonbridge N.S. is a data controller for personal data processed for school purposes. Children's personal data requires particular protection. School-owned assistive technology will therefore be configured and used in a manner consistent with GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's privacy and data-security arrangements.

- Personal data stored on the device should be limited to what is necessary for learning and support.
- The school may use appropriate technical and organisational security measures, including user accounts, passcodes, encryption, filtering, device management, updates, backups and access restrictions.
- The school may carry out proportionate checks of school-owned equipment for maintenance, security, safeguarding and compliance purposes. Such checks will respect privacy and will not amount to unrestricted monitoring of private family activity.
- Any suspected loss of personal data, unauthorised access, malware, phishing incident or other security breach must be reported to the Principal promptly so that the school can assess and respond to the incident.
- Parents/guardians and pupils should not attempt to erase logs, disable security controls or reset the device without school approval.

9. Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

Generative AI tools may only be used where their use is permitted by the school and appropriate to the pupil's age, learning needs and the task. Pupils must not submit AI-generated material as their own work or use AI to avoid the learning purpose of an assignment. Personal, sensitive or confidential school information must not be entered into public AI services unless the school has expressly approved the service and the intended use.

10. Maintenance, Faults, Damage, Loss or Theft

- The school will arrange routine maintenance, updates, approved repairs and, where applicable, insurance in accordance with its responsibilities as owner of the equipment.
- Faults, defects, damage or malfunction must be reported promptly to the Principal or designated teacher. Pupils and parents/guardians must not arrange repairs independently unless authorised by the school.
- Where equipment is lost or stolen, the parent/guardian must notify the Principal as soon as practicable and provide the relevant details. The school will advise whether a report to An Garda Síochána, the insurer or the Data Protection Commission is required.
- Accidental damage will be considered on its facts and in light of insurance and Department arrangements. The school will not impose an automatic charge for every repair. Where loss or damage results from

deliberate misuse, reckless conduct or a failure to take reasonable care, the Board of Management may consider recovery of an appropriate cost, subject to fair procedures and the circumstances of the case.

11. Return, Reallocation and End of Use

The equipment and all accessories must be returned in good order by the agreed date, at the end of the school year if requested, when the pupil leaves the school, when the educational need changes, or whenever requested by the school. Before reallocation, the school will take appropriate steps to protect personal data, including secure removal of pupil information where required.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Board of Management	Approves the policy; oversees school property, risk and insurance arrangements; supports fair and consistent implementation.
Principal / Designated Teacher	Maintains records; authorises issue/return arrangements; coordinates checks, maintenance, incidents and communication with parents/guardians and relevant agencies.
Teachers / SET	Agree educational use; teach safe and effective use; monitor educational benefit and raise concerns promptly.
Parent/Guardian	Provides reasonable supervision and safe custody; supports compliance with this policy and the AUP; reports faults, loss, damage or security incidents promptly.
Pupil	Uses the equipment responsibly for agreed educational purposes; follows school rules; takes reasonable care; reports problems to an adult.

13. Breaches of the Agreement

Where there is a concern about misuse, the school will respond proportionately, taking account of the pupil's age, needs, the seriousness of the incident and relevant school policies. The school may temporarily restrict functions, require the equipment to be returned, review the home-use arrangement, apply measures under the AUP/Code of Behaviour/Bí Cineálta procedures, or make safeguarding/data-protection referrals where required.

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically and sooner where there is a significant change in legislation, Department/NCSE guidance, technology, safeguarding requirements or school practice. Individual home-use arrangements may be reviewed at any time to ensure that they continue to support the pupil's educational needs.

Appendix 1 - Home Use Agreement

School-Owned Assistive Technology

This agreement records the equipment issued to the pupil and confirms acceptance of the Home Use of School-Owned Assistive Technology Policy and other relevant school policies.

Pupil name (block capitals)	
Class	
Class teacher	
Assistive technology make/model	
Serial / asset number	
Approximate value (if recorded)	
Software/apps/accounts configured	
Accessories issued (case, charger, keyboard, headphones, microphone, etc.)	
Condition on issue	
Date issued	
Agreed return arrangements	

Parent/Guardian Declaration

I confirm that I have received/read the Home Use of School-Owned Assistive Technology Policy and the school's Acceptable Use Policy. I agree to support my child in using the equipment for approved educational purposes, to provide reasonable supervision, to take reasonable care of the equipment while it is away from school, and to report loss, theft, damage, faults or security concerns promptly.

Pupil Declaration

I understand that the equipment belongs to the school. I agree to use it carefully and only for agreed school work and assistive purposes, to follow the school's digital-use rules, and to tell a parent/guardian or teacher if something goes wrong or if I see something online that worries me.

Pupil signature (where appropriate)	
Date	
Parent/Guardian name	
Parent/Guardian signature	
Principal / authorised staff signature	
Date	

Policy note: This document is a school policy template and should be read alongside current Department of Education/NCSE requirements and the school's own legal, insurance, data-protection and safeguarding advice.