

1. Introduction

This Acceptable Use Policy ("Policy") outlines the rules and guidelines for the use of Merula's broadband services ("Services"). The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all users enjoy reliable, secure, and lawful use of the Services. By using the Services, you agree to comply with this Policy.

This Policy applies to both residential and business users and aims to maintain equitable network access while protecting the integrity of our network infrastructure.

2. Prohibited Uses

You may not use the Services in any way that is illegal, harmful, or disruptive. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

2.1 Unlawful Activities

Engaging in activities that violate any applicable laws, regulations, or standards. Disseminating, storing, or transmitting illegal, defamatory, obscene, or offensive content. Promoting hate speech, terrorism, violence, or criminal activities.

2.2 Security Violations

Attempting to gain unauthorised access to any computer, system, network, or device. Engaging in activities that disrupt the integrity or performance of Merula's network or other users' devices, including denial-of-service (DoS) attacks. Distributing viruses, malware, or other harmful software.

2.3 Intellectual Property Infringement

Infringing on the copyrights, trademarks, patents, or other intellectual property rights of third parties. Sharing or downloading copyrighted material without appropriate permissions.

2.4 Spam and Unsolicited Communications

Sending bulk, unsolicited communications (e.g., spam emails, SMS, or messages). Using automated systems (e.g., bots or scripts) to send promotional content or spam.

3. User Responsibilities

You are responsible for ensuring that your use of the Services complies with this Policy. This includes:

3.1 Third-Party Use

You are responsible for the actions of anyone you allow to use the Services, including family members, visitors, tenants, or other individuals. Any breaches of this Policy by third parties using your connection are your responsibility.

3.2 Security

Securing your devices and network with strong passwords, up-to-date software, and antivirus protection. Preventing unauthorised access to your network and devices.

3.3 Monitoring Usage

Regularly monitor your usage through tools provided by Merula (e.g., online portals or apps) to ensure compliance.

3.4 Minors

Taking precautions to ensure that individuals under 18 years old use the Services responsibly. Enabling parental controls or restricting access to unsuitable content.

4. Network Management

To ensure a fair and consistent experience for all users, Merula may implement the following measures:

4.1 Monitoring

We may monitor network usage to identify and address excessive or disruptive behaviour. Monitoring is conducted in line with our Privacy Policy and applicable regulations.

4.2 Traffic Management

During peak times, we may prioritise certain types of traffic to maintain the overall quality of service. In cases of excessive bandwidth usage, we may reduce speeds temporarily or contact you to discuss your usage.

4.3 Fair Use

Unlimited data plans are subject to fair use. Excessive usage that affects other users' experiences may result in restrictions or service adjustments. If your usage consistently exceeds typical residential levels, we may:

- Provide a warning and offer recommendations.
- Apply traffic management measures.
- Suspend or terminate your service.

5. Consequences of Breach

Violations of this Policy may result in the following actions:

5.1 Warnings

We will notify you of a breach and provide guidance on corrective actions.

5.2 Service Limitations

Persistent or severe breaches may result in temporary restrictions or suspensions of your Services.

5.3 Termination

For repeated or significant violations, we reserve the right to terminate your contract immediately.

5.4 Legal Action

Illegal activities, including fraud or malicious behaviour, may be reported to law enforcement authorities.

6. Security

6.1 Network Devices

Ensure that your routers and other network devices are secured with strong passwords and up-to-date firmware. Disconnect devices that appear compromised or malfunctioning.

6.2 Data Privacy

Protect your personal data and ensure secure transmission when accessing the internet.

7. Reporting Violations

7.1 How to Report

You can report suspected violations of this Policy by contacting us via:

- Email: support@merula.net
- Phone: 0330 341 6666

7.2 Investigation

We will investigate reported violations promptly and take appropriate action as necessary.

8. Services with Specific Rules

8.1 Voice Services

Prohibited activities include misuse of premium-rate numbers or international call fraud.

8.2 Static IP Addresses

Static IP users must comply with additional guidelines, such as securing hosted services and avoiding illegal activities.

9. Penalties for Excessive Usage

9.1 Usage Thresholds

If usage exceeds reasonable residential limits, we may:

- Discuss upgrading to a higher-tier plan.
- Temporarily reduce bandwidth during peak hours.

9.2 Charges

Users may be moved to business packages or incur additional charges if they persistently exceed thresholds.

10. Policy Enforcement

10.1 Customer Support

Customers will have the opportunity to resolve issues amicably before enforcement escalates.

10.2 Dispute Process

Users can contest enforcement actions by contacting our complaints team via email or phone.

11. Transparency Commitments

11.1 Advance Communication

We promise to communicate changes to this Policy or enforcement actions clearly and in advance where possible.

11.2 Examples of Actions

Examples of network management measures include throttling bandwidth for heavy video streaming during peak hours or restricting access to illegal content.

12. Updates to the Policy

This Policy may be updated to reflect changes in laws, technology, or business practices. Updates will be published on our website, and continued use of the Services constitutes acceptance of the updated Policy.

13. Related Policies

This Policy is part of your contract with Merula and should be read alongside:

- Terms & Conditions
- Privacy Policy
- Complaints Code of Practice