

# Social Media Policy



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# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## RATIONALE

As a school we wish to uphold a positive image with all stakeholders; pupils, staff, parents, governors and community members. We strive at all times to create an environment where there is mutual respect, where each person is valued as an individual and pastoral care is an integral part of education. Each pupil will be encouraged to fulfill his or her moral, intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional potential.

Use of ICT allows all pupils to gain confidence and ability in an ever-changing society and prepares them for the challenge of a rapidly developing and evolving technological world.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social networking has become an integral part of the world. It is common to find parents, children, co-workers and others on such sites. With social networks people across the world have access to tools and options that were previously non-existent. However, these new opportunities also bring potential dangers which require careful management by parents and school staff.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

1.1 People who work with children and young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid improper contact or relationships and respect their position of trust. With regard to relationships, individuals who work with children and young people should not attempt to establish a relationship, which might include:

- communication of a personal nature
- inappropriate dialogue through the internet
- the sending of emails or text messages of an inappropriate nature

1.2 Individuals who work with children and young people, should be extremely careful in corresponding with people on social networking sites. Staff relationships with children and young people should, at all times, remain professional and they should **not** correspond with children and young people through such sites or add them as 'friends'. It is worth bearing in mind that, on such sites, an inappropriate or even misconstrued communication may have the potential to impact upon their careers, or even result in criminal investigation.

1.3 In addition staff should bear in mind **who** may access their own profiles on such websites. Staff should therefore take care as to the information they display about themselves, their personal lives and should not make any reference to school or individuals within it. They

should also ensure that they have installed, and are using, the highest level of privacy settings.

- 1.4 Individuals who work with children and young people and others, with whom they may be in a position of trust, should exercise caution when using social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind.
- 1.5 Staff should not post any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities without prior permission from the Principal. Before posting any images of school community members taken at events not related to school, for example at social events, permission should be directly sought from the parties involved.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS**

- 2.1 Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking.
- 2.2 Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters, Teachers2Parents, Google Classroom, SeeSaw, the School Facebook Page and verbal discussion. Pictures taken of pupils within the school setting/at school events will only be used in a way that has been pre-approved by their parents / guardians.
- 2.3 Complaints made in public through social media are detrimental and possibly damaging to the school community and as such are not beneficial to the children. Parents/carers should raise concerns and complaints following the school's complaints procedure and should not do this via social media.
- 2.4 In the event that parents/carers post inaccurate, malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about/naming any member of the school community or any school policy, process or procedure, the school will, in the first instance ask that the post is removed immediately. Further action may be taken by the individual concerned (see point 2.5)
- 2.5 Malicious or inappropriate comments may be reported by the individuals affected and may result in accounts being removed. Fictitious or defamatory comments may also result in legal action. Action will also be taken if any inappropriate comments are made in which a member of the school community can be identified from the content of the comment. Where appropriate, comments will be reported to the PSNI.

## **GUIDANCE/PROTECTION FOR PUPILS ON USING SOCIAL NETWORKING**

3.1 No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance for both Facebook and Instagram. WhatsApp has a minimum age of 16.