

Social Media Policy



Reviewed/Updated	Date
Updated	December 2025
Review	December 2028

<u>Signed:</u>	<u>Signed:</u>
Chair of Board of Governors	Principal

Rationale

At Crawfordsburn Primary School we believe in the importance of learning to care for others, ourselves and the world around us. We care deeply about all members of our school and local community and 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.

We recognise that the digital world is changing constantly. This is particularly true of social media. Today people are choosing to communicate with family, friends and strangers through multiple social platforms. As a school we recognise that our pupils need to be empowered with the right emotional and decision-making skills, as well as technical skills, to navigate the digital world they live in confidently and safely.

Crawfordsburn Primary School respects the desire of staff members and parents to communicate using social media platforms. We recognise that as a school we hold no jurisdiction in policing social media platforms but urge the whole school community to work collaboratively to communicate appropriately. Conversely, we understand that as a school we have a responsibility to protect individual members of the school community and act aptly to inappropriate or threatening communication.

The partnership of parent and school is intrinsic to realising the best educational outcomes for our pupils. This policy outlines the context of social media and the responsibilities that staff and parents have in role-modelling effective and safe communication on social media.

Social Media

One thing we often forget while having fun on social networks is that almost anybody can see what we are doing. While we are tagging photos of our friends or are posting comments to them, it can be easy to forget that someone else who has been invited onto a social networking site can also view them.

Once something appears on the internet, it's almost impossible to remove. As these sites continue to grow in popularity, so too does the value of the information on them to parties other than those directly involved. It is because of this that all social networking users need to think carefully about what they're posting.

Responsibilities of Staff

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

Individuals who work with children and young people, should be extremely careful in corresponding with people on social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind. 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 a staff member's career or even result in criminal investigation.

Where the primary relationship is not through school, for instance a family member or close family friend, we would advise cautious, transparent communication, that is inclusive of parents/carers.

Individuals, who work with children and young people, should not be corresponding with them or their family on social networking sites unless there are clearly identified links outside of school life.

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

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. 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

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media through the implementation of this policy.

Methods of school communication include 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 by the school in a way that has been pre-approved by their parents / carers. Furthermore, it is recommended that pictures taken by parents within the school setting/at school events should not be posted on social media.

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 not post comments on social media about any member of the school community or any school policy, process or procedure. Parents should be aware that comments which could be defamatory or fictitious could be subject of legal proceedings. 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. In the event that parents/carers post inaccurate, malicious or fictitious comments on social media 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.

The school Facebook page is intended to be a one way means of communication to inform parents and share the school successes. Comments made are moderated and if threatening

or inappropriate comments are made, individuals will be reported and blocked from the page in future. If anyone is aware of an inappropriate comment posted on the school Facebook page they should report it to the school immediately.

Parents/carers should raise concerns and complaints through the school's complaints procedure and should not do this via social media.

Guidance/Protection for pupils on using Social Media

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.

There are a number of useful guides and links on eSafety (including parent guides) available on the school website's 'Parents Section'
(<https://www.crawfordsburnps.com/page/?title=E%2DSafety&pid=55>)