Lisburn Central Primary School and Nursery Unit

Social Media Policy

Policy statement and principles

The priority of Lisburn Central Primary School's pastoral care policy is to ensure the safety and well - being of the children at all times. The ethos of the school is intended to create an atmosphere where children will feel able to talk to teachers if they have any anxieties or concerns and that these will be dealt with sympathetically.

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Pastoral Care
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force/Safe Handling
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- First Aid and the Administration of Medicines Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- E Safety/ Mobile Phone Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Bereavement
- Code of Conduct

These policies are available to parents and any parent requiring a copy should contact the School Principal.

Our core safeguarding principles are that

- It is our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children which is of paramount importance
- safer children make more successful learners
- policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

Social Media Policy

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and many other social network services.

Lisburn Central Primary School recognises the benefits of social networks for new and exciting forms of communication. Staff, parents/carers and pupils are actively encouraged to find ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy sets out the principles that staff, parents, carers and pupils are expected to follow when using social media. The School Internet, Network, Mobile Phone and Behaviour documents also inform this Policy.

This Policy applies to personal web space such as social networking sites on, for example, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, Blogs, Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, social bookmarking sites and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube.

The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or be aware of all the latest forms of emerging media and platforms. This Policy covers the use of existing and any future social networking platforms.

Scope

This policy is subject to the school's Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

This policy:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

Lisburn Central Primary School respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on, the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils are also considered. *Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.*

Behaviour

The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

Legal considerations

Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing. Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

Offensive comments will be handled swiftly and with sensitivity. If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken. If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of Images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's **E-Safety Policy**. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.

- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pupil pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Pupils should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.

Guidelines for pupils

"Respect for yourself and consideration for others" is our guiding principle.

- Pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame other pupils or any member of staff.
- Pupils must not use social media in a way that brings disrespect to our school.
- Photographs, videos or any image of pupils, staff or any member of our school community must not be published on a personal or public web space without prior permission from the school.
- Pupils and the wider school community should not post images or videos from school trips on any social media site.
- Social network sites should never be accessed within school.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action and possible suspension.

Guidelines for staff

It is possible that many staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner:

- Staff must never add pupils as friends into their personal accounts.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times.
- Staff need to use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current GTCNI standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Posting derogatory comments about pupils, parents or colleagues is never acceptable. Staff are required to uphold the reputation of the school, to maintain reasonable standards in their own behaviour, and to uphold public trust in their profession.
- Staff may have legitimate reasons to use social network accounts to support learning in the classroom or, for example, to communicate with sports teams. All social media uses must be approved by the Principal in advance.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Principal.

Guidelines for Parents/Carers

All parents have a responsibility in role-modelling effective, appropriate, and safe communication on social media.
Parents and carers should be aware of their responsibilities regarding the use of social networking:

- Parents should not post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.
- Parents should be aware that primary aged children should not be on social media platforms as most of these have an age restriction of 14+. It is the parents' duty to protect their children from unhelpful social media contact. It is also not the school's responsibility to deal with any social media issues which have taken place outside of school.
- Parents should not share complaints about a child, teacher, or school, through social media (including Parents' WhatsApp Groups) as such action, and subsequent comments by others, may cause significant emotional distress to those persons named and the school community as a whole. Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Methods of proper school communication with parents/carers include:
- School prospectus, school website, newsletters, texting service, emails, letters and face to face meetings.
- Online learning platforms used by schools, such as Seesaw and Google Classroom, should not be used by parents to share complaints as any comments made will be visible to pupils within school.

Monitoring posts about the school

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school. The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:
- "Nothing" on social media is truly private.
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo on personal accounts.
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy.
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint.
- Keep your personal information private.
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to.
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post.
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem.

Managing School Social Media Accounts

Do's
- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school.
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views.
- Make it clear who is posting content.
- Use an appropriate and professional tone.
- Be respectful to all parties.
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author.
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner.
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion.
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process.
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible.

Don'ts
- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute.
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material.
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation.
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content.
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances.