

Social Media Policy

School of the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

School of the Holy Spirit is committed to developing the technological and communication skills of our students and understands that digital resources, if used appropriately and constructively, can be beneficial in their education. The Board of Management acknowledges the increasing use of social media sites for purposes connected to the school and recognises the opportunities a social media presence offers.

Rationale:

This policy has been developed to offer guidance and direction to all members of the school community on the safe and responsible use of social media, as irresponsible and inappropriate use can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity online.

Aims:

- That all members of the school community will uphold the values of the school in all social media interactions.
- That all members of the school community will use social media in a respectful and responsible manner.
- To produce a set of strategies for students, staff and parents that will allow safe and responsible use of social media.
- To protect the good name of all members of the school community from online abuse.
- To outline behaviours that are unacceptable and the consequences for engaging in same.
- To outline procedures for school community members who find themselves the victims of inappropriate social media behaviour.

Definitions:

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social media refers to all social networking sites. These sites include but are not limited to: Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Whatsapp, Tik Tok , Instagram , SMS , YouTube , and includes emails and mobile devices.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management will approve the policy and ensure its development and evaluation.

The Principal and Deputy Principal will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy, its implementation and monitoring.

Teachers will plan for the inclusion of cyber safety awareness within the curriculum with guidance from the Department of Education, will outline the unacceptable uses of social media to students, advise safe use practices and be alert to the signs and possibilities of bullying in their class. Teachers will report any incidents of bullying and be mindful of their obligations under Child Safeguarding.

All staff will be encouraged to participate in and engage with internet safety training as provided by agencies such as the Department of Education, Webwise, Bernardos etc.

Parents/guardians will be responsible, aware and informed about their child's online activity and be proactive in the supervision and guidance of their child while online. Parents/Guardians will be aware and compliant with school rules around social media and will be informed about upcoming relevant training by the school.

Guidelines:

Students:

- Read and comply with the terms and conditions of social media sites as many have age restrictions eg. Facebook, Instagram and Tic Tok are restricted to 13 years of age and above.
- Are aware of what they are posting online and that social media sites and applications are public forums.
- Should not access social networking sites during the school day.
- Should put their mobile phone or device into the class box each morning.
- Should not wear a watch with a camera, can video, record or be used to play online games in school eg. VTECH

- Should respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Should not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.
- Should not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten other members of the school community.
- Should not make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community.
- Should not use threatening or offensive language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the school community.
- Should not harm the reputation of School of the Holy Spirit or those within its community.
- Should not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the School of the Holy Spirit community.
- Should report any instances of online bullying or abuse to an adult in the school.
- Should not seek to befriend staff in the school on social media sites.

Staff and Teacher Guidelines:

- Should not accept students or past students as "friends" on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.
- Should only interact with students in an educational context.
- Should not discuss students or colleagues or publically criticize school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- Are personally responsible for content they publish online.
- Should not upload any photographs or videos related to a student, staff member or school activity.
- Should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school's values and ethos.
- Should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to School of the Holy Spirit community and its members.
- Should practice confidentiality in all instances under investigation and only confer with the teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal in regards to the issue.
- Should report any knowledge of school related online bullying or abuse to the Designated Liaison Person.

Parent/Guardian Guidelines:

- Be aware that many social media sites have age restrictions eg. Facebook, Tic Tok, Instagram are age 13 and above. Parents need to read the terms and conditions of various social media sites and applications their children are interested in using.
- Be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their children to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- Need to seek permission from any individual involved prior to uploading photos, videos or audio.
- Be aware that online postings are not private and should not share confidential information, internal school discussions or specific information about students, staff or other parents/guardians.
- Should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the School of the Holy Spirit community and its members.
- Should not make use of social media sites while assisting in classroom activities.
- Should report any instances or knowledge of instances of online bullying or abuse to the Principal.

School Practices:

- The school will engage with Internet Safety Day and Internet Safety Week annually.
- Visiting speakers on internet safety will be booked by the school to give talks and workshops to students, staff and parents/guardians.
- Teachers who complete training in this area will feed back to the relevant staff at organised times.
- Students place their mobile phone or device into the class device box each morning and it is returned to them at the end of the school day.
- The Principal and/or the Deputy Principal will proactively engage with students regularly to inform and discuss the dangers associated with the inappropriate use of the internet.

Sanctions for policy infringements:

Each situation arising from infringement of this policy will be treated on an individual basis. The school's Code of Behaviour Policy will be the basis of actions taken by the school in this area.

Infringements of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including but not exclusively:

- **Suspension of network and computer privileges**
- **Confiscation of devices if found on school grounds or on school related activities**
- **Notification to parents/guardians**
- **Suspension from school or school related activities.**

Managing change and issues arising:

We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the School of the Holy Spirit community has a concern or question pertaining to social media or social networking sites they should raise the issue with the school principal.

The Principal will seek and engage with continued support of the Community Gardai.

The Principal will refer to TUSLA and/or The Garda Siochana for guidance when necessary when dealing with incidents arising from the misuse of social media within the school community.

Success Criteria:

- There is an increased awareness among students, staff and parents
- Members of the school community understand their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to social media.
- Issues arising from inappropriate use of social media are dealt with according to this policy and the Code of Behaviour.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be monitored by the Principal, Deputy Principal and staff and reviews will be taken as deemed necessary.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour and the Mobile Phone Policy.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

It will be reviewed by the Board in 2025.

Signed : _____

Chairman Board of Management

Signed : _____

Principal

Date : _____