

Social Media Policy

Mindful of the duties and responsibilities assigned to staff in working with pupils, it is vital that staff be engaged in working with pupils at all times throughout the school day. In this context, access to phones should be limited to urgency / emergency only.

To ensure the protection of privacy and the use of appropriate channels of communication, staff should not give personal contact details out to parents. In exceptional circumstances, staff should discuss with the principal prior to providing such details.

Teachers can make contact with parents by email, school phone or by using the SeeSaw App. If using their personal phone numbers, they are to be withheld.

School Related Calls

- Calls to parents/guardians should be kept as short as possible. Where a lengthy conversation with parents/guardians is deemed necessary, this call should be made after class time or an appointment should be made to meet with parents/guardians. All calls must be noted on Aladdin.
- Calls to other professionals and organisations should be made after class time or in consultation with the Principal so that classroom supervision can be arranged.

Personal Calls

- In general, personal calls should only be made during staff break times
- In cases of urgency / emergency, a staff member should use discretion in making calls. They should not be taken in general school common areas.
- Incoming calls should be reserved for urgent matters only

Mobile Phones

- During class time, mobile phones should be switched off / on silent and left in locker or handbag and only switched on during staff break times
- In cases of urgency, staff should follow the same rules in relation to personal calls
- The same rules apply to texting / using phone internet i.e. staff break times only

- In certain circumstances, staff may use a class phone to access music/class resources/kids youtube or other specific student resources.

Taking and Using of Photos or Videos in School

This details the rules governing photography and recording videos at the school, the distribution of these photos and videos, and their publication on the internet.

It covers the rules for staff, BOM and parents, and is founded on four main principles:

Safety

The overriding priority is to ensure that photography does not lead, either directly or indirectly, to anything that may potentially endanger the safety of the children at the school.

Privacy

We believe that every child and parent is entitled to their own privacy, and can therefore choose not to feature in photographs or videos recorded at the school.

Projecting the right image

Photographs taken at school should not do anything that may cause embarrassment to the school, the children, or the staff.

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Photographs taken at school should not do anything that may cause embarrassment to the school, children or the staff. No photos taken on school property should be posted on any staff member's personal social media or social groups.

Sharing Children's Achievements

It is natural for every parent to want to share their children's activities and achievements at school with their friends and family. This school is keen to allow this as much as possible, while keeping this in balance with the first three principles.

Consent

When a child joins the school, their parent or guardian is asked for consent, for the child to appear in photos on the school website' and in school publications. The school encourages all parents to provide consent, as it enables us to include all the children in depictions of school life, but we recognise and respect the right to refuse consent. Parents may withdraw consent at any time, or grant consent if they had previously declined.

Child Protection (Refer to Child Safeguarding Statement)

The BOM has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. In the event of an inappropriate use of photographs in school materials the Designated Liaison Person (Anna Lombard Perito) will follow the Child Protection Guidelines and the Child Safeguarding Statement. In her absence, the Deputy Designated Liaison (Stephanie Wall) will act accordingly

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018

Photographs and video images of pupils and staff are classed as personal data under the terms of GDPR 2018. Therefore, using such images for school publicity purposes requires the consent of either the individual concerned or in the case of pupils, their legal guardians. St. Michael's House Special National School will not display images of pupils or staff on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access. Where photographs are taken at an event attended by large crowds, this is regarded as a public area so it is not necessary to get permission of everyone in a crowd shot. GDPR 2018 does not apply to photographs or films taken for personal use by family and friends.

Appropriate Use of Images in School Publicity Materials

The staff of St. Michael's House Special National School will:

- Ensure that images are stored securely and used only by those authorised to do so.

- Ensure that electronic images are stored on a secure network to which members of the public do not have access.

- Not use an image of a child who is subject to a court order.

- Not use photographs of children or staff, which have left the school, without their consent.

- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed, dignity should always be preserved.

The Press

The use of photographs in newspapers and magazines is already subject to strict guidelines. The Press Council of Ireland's Code of Practice states that:

- Print and online news media shall take particular care in seeking and presenting information or comment about a child under the age of 16.
- Journalists and editors should have regard for the vulnerability of children, and in all dealings with children should bear in mind the age of the child, whether parental or other adult consent has been obtained for such dealings, the sensitivity of the subject-matter, and what circumstances if any make the story one of public interest.
- Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- The fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian must not be used as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.
- St. Michael's House Special National School will not provide names of children to accompany photographs published in newspapers and magazines without parental consent.
- No staff member is to talk to the press without discussing with the principal and SMH media team first.

Filming Events

It is usual for parents to take photographs and videos of children at school events such as school plays, school leavers' graduations, award ceremonies and sporting and social school events.

We would ask parents who do this not to share pictures/videos of our pupils/staff on social media. Pictures/videos taken at school events should not be published on any internet site. This includes Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and all other social media services unless permission have been sought from the principal.

School Website & School Social Media Sites

Any material published to the website must be assessed to ensure it meets the following safeguarding rules:

- Must not feature any child who has not given consent.
- Must not identify a child by name

Social Media

The Social Media Policy provides guidance and direction to all St. Michael's House staff,

BOM staff and St. Michael's house SNS Baldoyle staff when utilizing social media sites and networks. Social Media is continuously updating and changing so this policy is a guideline on behaviours in relation to social media for employees. Covid-19 in 2020 has made social media sites a great form of communication for staff, community, service users, students and families. We welcome the controlled delivery in improving communications but are cautiously outline the concerns of social media usage in this policy.

It is important that this Policy on social media is read in conjunction with other staff policies. Particular attention is drawn to the schools Dignity at work policy and Child safeguarding Statement. All School policies and procedures are available in your classroom policy folder and in the office.

St Michael's House Code of Standards and Behaviour with the Schools Code of Conduct:

There is an implied term of mutual trust and confidence between employer and staff in all employment contracts. All staff are asked not to:

- Post comments on social media from a work position perspective.
- Use the school's name, logos, images or comment on behalf of St Michaels House SNS.
- Establish, set up or commence any social media pages or accounts linked to or on behalf of St Michaels House school without permission.
- Post photos/videos taken on school premises even if no students are visible in the images

Any negative, defamatory or damaging posting or communication by a staff member may entitle St Michaels House/BOM to proceed with disciplinary process. Staff must not improperly disclose, during or following termination of employment, information gained in the course of their work. Staff are expected to comply with all school and patron policies.

Using Social Media Sites

Staff should always be mindful of what they are posting, who can see it and how it can be linked back to the school/organization and colleagues. The BOM reserves the right to utilize for disciplinary purposes any information that could have a negative effect on the school/organization or its staff, which management comes across in regular internet

monitoring or is brought to the attention of management by staff or members of the public.

Staff are prohibited from using or publishing information on any Social Media sites, such behavior include:

- Confidential or student-sensitive information.
- Material that might reasonably be expected to have the effect of damaging the reputation or professional standing of the organization.

Using your own Personal Social Media Profile:

Staff are entitled to explore and engage in social media communities in a personal capacity, at a level at which they feel comfortable. Your chosen career is working with students with severe to profound complex needs and so you have a responsibility to represent yourself and those within the school/organization.

Pupil privacy, Data Protection requirements, defamation law and basic duty of care still apply in comments that are made while off-duty and online.

If a staff member comments online in a personal capacity, these comments can and may be attributed or perceived as the official position of the school/organization.

Use of Personal Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Phones/Tablets:

Staff must have their personal mobile phones turned off or on silent during work time.

While at work, all staff are asked not to:

- Access/participate in social networking websites.
- Use the school/organisations equipment to access personal sites.
- Access any personal/other peoples accounts on such sites.
- Engage in communication on messaging services/sites that could result in a staff member feeling excluded/harassed.
- Set up staff groups of information sharing.

While engaging with colleagues, inside or outside of work, posting on social media sites, staff must remember to treat each other with respect and dignity and not post anything that could cause harm or affect someone's experience while at work.

Staff are also expected to remember they are not to use any of their personal social media sites to engage with parents.

You chosen career is working with students who have severe to profound complex needs so you have a responsibility to represent yourself and those within the organization appropriately and with respect at all times.

Top Tips: How staff members can support the Policy:

- Staff should be respectful of all individuals, backgrounds, races, religions and cultures. How you conduct yourself in the online social media space not only reflects on you – it is a direct reflection on your professionalism and your employer.
- Personal blogs/pages created by staff, including micro-blogs like Twitter accounts ,should have a clear disclaimer that the views expressed by the author in the blog/pages are the author's alone and do not represent the views of St. Michael's House Special School Baldoyle.
- Tagging, hash tag or linking St. Michael's House social media sites to your personal sites will link you to the organisation for the one post and future posts.
- Think before you post. Anything you post that is inaccurate, unfair, or breaking client privacy standards will ultimately be your responsibility.
- Be conscious you are in a professional role within the school and staff have to be very mindful of their professional boundaries and potential crossover into their personal lives. St. Michael's House respects the privacy of all staff, but you must remember that students, their families and colleagues may have access to the online content you post.
- Know that the internet is permanent. Once information is published online, it is essentially part of a permanent record, even if you "remove/delete" it later, or attempt to make it anonymous.
- Be aware of Data Protection rules – you must not post colleagues' details or pictures without their individual permission. Photographs of company events should not be posted online.
- If you make a mistake, be the first to point it out and correct it quickly.
- St. Michael's House logos and trademarks may not be used without the prior

consent of the Communications Department.

- Please be mindful when sending messages using widely used messaging platforms. Do not post anything to your colleagues that might be interpreted as harmful or cause offence.

Protecting Staff from online Abuse

Where staff are notified of, or are concerned about an abusive or defamatory post, profile, comment or page relating to a St. Michael's House staff member or student, this should be reported immediately to the principal.


Protecting Students from online Abuse

All students consent for photographs or video postings on school social media accounts/school website etc will be recorded on Aladdin during the first parent teacher meeting. Written consent will also be asked for when new students are starting school.

Non-compliance with the general principles and conditions of this Social Media Policy and other school policies and confidentiality policies may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

This Policy is not exhaustive. In situations that are not expressly governed by this Policy, you must ensure that your use of social media, messaging and the internet is at all times appropriate and consistent with your responsibilities towards the school and organisation.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 10th of September 2025.

Chairperson: 

Principal: 