



Social Media Policy January 2016



Social Media Policy

Introduction

Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery acknowledge that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social media sites. Social media plays an important role in the lives of many people. These sites are powerful tools and are fast becoming an integral part of our lives. The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways.

We recognise that there are many benefits to be reaped from the use of social media but understand that the use of such sites also bring risks.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage responsible, positive and constructive use of social media.
- Prevent and avoid damage to the reputation of Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery and its employees, caused by irresponsible or unauthorised use of social media.
- Protect all school stakeholders, and remind them of their personal responsibilities both in and out of school when using social media.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide a balance between supporting the use of social media, whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests in a virtual community. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are well-known examples but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, online discussion forums and message boards, video and audio podcasts, wikis, photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube.

This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social media applications by all school stakeholders, including teachers, support staff, Governors, pupils, parents, supply staff, work experience and teaching practice students and volunteers.

Access to Social Media on School Premises

- School equipment must not, at any time, be used for personal access to social media.
- School equipment may only be used to access and post to social media on behalf of the school, by official users, or as part of any approved curriculum activities.
- Employees may use any personal devices they own to access social media during any breaks, provided this is done responsibly, in accordance with this policy, and all other relevant policies of the school and away from the presence of pupils.

Approved use of Social Media on behalf of the school

- All use of social media on behalf of the school (official use) must comply fully, and be approved in accordance with this policy and all other relevant policies of the school. It must also comply with all relevant laws.
- **Only official users may post any information, videos or photos with the approval of the Senior Management of the school.**

Personal use of Social Media by employees

All employees of Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery (teachers, support staff and governors) have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect. It is important for everyone to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

We also encourage our employees to ensure that their personal reputation is not compromised by inappropriate postings.

Our code of conduct for the personal use of social media by employees is as follows:

- Employees should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with pupils, in any way, on social media applications (including past pupils under the age of 18).
- Employees must immediately inform the Principal if pupils attempt to “follow”, “friend” or engage with them, in any way, on social media applications.
- Employees should never use or access social media sites of pupils (including past pupils under the age of 18).
- Employees should report any damaging or negative comment about the school on social media to the Principal.
- Employees must not post derogatory or inappropriate comments about pupils, parents, colleagues or anyone else at / or connected with the school.
- Employees must not post information, pictures/videos of pupils, school events or opinions about Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery on ANY form of social media site. Such information may be passed to the official users of the school’s social media sites, for consideration, if appropriate.
- Employees must not use social media within lesson times (for personal use).
- Employees should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Employees are encouraged to review their postings on social media sites to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate.
- Employees must not use social media in a way that would put them in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Employees need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social media sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

Please note that the term “employees” includes teachers, support staff, Governors, supply staff, work experience and teaching practice students and volunteers.

Any breaches of this code will be fully investigated. Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery will take appropriate action in order to protect the school’s reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

The use of Social Media by parents and carers

Parents and carers have a right to use social media and Omagh Integrated Primary and Nursery respect that. However, **the school also has a right to protect its reputation and has a duty of care to our pupils and employees.** In that regard, we wish to make parents and carers aware of our expectations regarding their use of social media:

- Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social media sites when these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Parents must not post any information about Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery on their personal social media accounts. Such information may be passed to the official users of the school's social media sites, for posting on the school's official accounts, if desired.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social media sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.
- Parents should report any damaging or negative comment about the school on social media to the Principal.

Effective communication, following principles of mutual respect, is the best means of ensuring high quality experiences for all in Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery. In the case of inappropriate use of social media by parents, the school will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels.

The use of Social Media by pupils

We wish to highlight that children must be at least 13 years old to use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. As safeguarding children is of fundamental importance to us all in Omagh Integrated Primary School and Nursery, if we become aware that any of our pupils have registered and are users of such sites, we will take further action.

In addition, pupils will be made aware that:

- They should not "follow", "friend" or engage with school employees, in any way, on social media applications. If pupils attempt to do this, the employee will inform the Principal and parents will be informed.
- School computers are not to be used to access social media sites at any time of day.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- Our school has a zero tolerance to cyber bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to report any improper contact or cyber bullying to a member of school staff as soon as it happens.

Review of policy

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies, this policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments in the use of technologies, new threats to E-safety or incidents that have taken place.

This policy was reviewed by staff on November 2015

This policy was reviewed by Governors on January 2016

Signed: _____ (Chair of the Board of Governors)

Signed: _____ (Principal)