

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

Acting Principal: Mrs Kielty



Holy Child Nursery School
40 Slievegallion Drive
Belfast BT11 8JP

Website: holychildnurseryschool.co.uk
Tel: 028 9062 7732

Holy Child Nursery School

Social Media Policy

Social media (e.g. Seesaw Learning Journal, personal Facebook/ 'X') is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them. This policy also covers messaging apps such as Whatsapp, Messenger, iMessage and other similar platforms.

Holy Child Nursery School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative 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 aims to encourage the safe use of social media by *the school*, its staff, parents, carers and children.

Scope

This policy is subject to Holy Child Nursery School's Codes 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*

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and parents/carers may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/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 personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school 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/students 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. E.g. Seesaw*

Overview

The internet provides several benefits for staff. However, when someone is identified with the setting or discusses their work, they are expected to behave appropriately when on the internet. The principles set out in this section of the policy should always be followed. If in doubt, then details should be discussed in the first instance with the Principal.

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with other users. However, it is not appropriate to share work-related information whether written or pictorial in this way. Staff members should respect the privacy and the feelings of others.

Staff are in a professional position and are responsible for the care and education of children. Therefore, they must not engage in activities on the internet which might bring the setting or its associated employees into disrepute.

Our use of social networking applications, has implications for our duty to safeguard children.

The aim of this section of the policy is:

1. That our duty to safeguard children is maintained
2. That the school is not exposed to legal risk
3. That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
4. That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school
5. That we do not damage our reputation

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

6. That we recognise our legal responsibilities

To ensure compliance the following should be noted:

1. Sites to be aware of include: Social networking sites (i.e. Facebook, twitter), blogs, discussion forums, media sharing services (i.e. You Tube)
2. All staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even though they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and freedom of information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups act 2006 and other legislation.
3. There will be no mention of the school, names of staff, attending children or their families.
4. Staff should not encourage parents as friends on social networking sites.
5. There will be no uploading of photos of staff, or children and their families on any site

Organisational Control

Roles & Responsibilities

Principal/Designated Teacher

- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
- Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
- Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
- Approve account creation

Administrator (Principal or Assistant Teacher)

- Create the account following principal approval
- Store account details, including passwords securely
- Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
- Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

Staff

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attending appropriate training
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

Monitoring

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

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.**
- **Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy.** Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media the principal will contact Chair of Governors before a response is provided.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to principal, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.*
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

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

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments 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 by colleagues 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)

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

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 will only be used where parental permission is given in advance.** 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 student pictures online other than via school owned & controlled social media accounts.**
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students 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.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use of Social Media & Messaging Platforms

Staff

- Personal communications are those made via a personal social media or messaging accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school 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.
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.*

Pupil/Students

Social Media Policy

Draft Policy: Shared 7th Oct 2023

Ratified by B of G on 18th October 2023

Review Date: October '25

- **Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.**
- The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media at their level.

Parents/Carers

- **If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.**
- The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the school's website and through Seesaw Learning Journal.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

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

This policy was developed by the Acting Principal, in conjunction with all staff and the Board of Governors. It will be reviewed every two years or when necessary, in light of any new legislation.

Agreed at the Governors Meeting dated 18th October 2023

Signed: Mrs Sharon Mc Gleave (Chair of Governors)