

# **Claddaghduff N.S Social Media Policy**

## **Introduction to the Policy**

The community at Claddaghduff National School is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications and media bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly, for educational purposes. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation and the safety of our pupils and staff.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- To encourage safe and responsible use of social media, as appropriate, within the school
- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school and staff is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social media applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Most social media sites are targeted at older teenagers and adults and to reflect this, have age restrictive registration policies. However, in reality, it is still possible for children under the age of thirteen to register using false information. Being mindful of this, as parents, guardians and educators, we need to be vigilant of the children's use of social media and educate them about the importance of safety online.

## **Scope**

The policy covers the use of all social media platforms used by students, teachers, staff, parents, guardians and carers which said platforms may be connected in any way to the running of and/or activities within the school.

All those connected to the school should bear in mind that the information they share through the use of social media platforms, even in a private setting, are subject to copyright, data protection, freedom of information and defamation laws and policy

## **General Terms of Use**

The terms of use apply to the use of all social media platforms by all those who have a connection to the school. This includes but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether

they are hosted on the school network or not. Where applications allow for the posting of messages on line, users must be mindful of the laws that may be applicable to such postings.

**Users must not use platforms related to the school in any way:**

- to publish any content which may result in criminal action and/or civil actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages.
- for promotion of financial interests, commercial ventures or for personal campaigns.
- to air grievances.
- to publish content that could amount to bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- to discuss or give advice on any school related matters, teaching methods, school policies, staff, pupils or parents.
- No staff member of the school should ‘connect’ with or ‘friend’ a student and/or former student who is under the age of 18.
- Staff should not identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- to publish any content that may have a negative impact on the school’s and/or the staff’s reputation.
- to publish the school logo without the express written permission of the Board of Management.
- to circulate, publish, promote or advertise any information whatsoever to do with school matters such as fundraising events or activities without the permission of the Principal and, where applicable, without the ratification of the Board of Management of Claddaghduff National School

**Specific terms of use for staff on the use of social media**

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18. This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil’s area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members’ area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child

**Specific Terms of use for Pupils on using social networking**

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day

- The use of smart mobile phones or any mobile phone is prohibited in the school unless there are exceptional circumstances and only then with the written permission of the Principal and Board of Management.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Principal. The child's parents will be informed.
- No school computers/ devices are to be used to access social networking 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
- Any improper contact or cyber bullying of any kind should be reported to the class teacher / principal as soon as it happens
- The Board of Management have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.
- No pupil may upload content to YouTube, Vimeo, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter WhatsApp, or alternative sites, of themselves and /or other pupils while on the school grounds, on school trips, and/or whilst in school uniform

### **Child protection guidance**

If any member of staff receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above, they should:

- Report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person (The Principal)
- The disclosure should be recorded by the Designated Liaison Person in line with the child protection policy, and Tusla should be contacted for guidance.
- Procedure as advised by Tusla will be followed, and the necessary authorities contacted.

### **Cyber Bullying**

By adopting this policy on the use of social media sites on school premises, Claddaghduff National School protects itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

- Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.
- Where a disclosure of cyber bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.
- Once a disclosure is made, an investigation will have to involve all parties involved and their families. This should be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying policy.
- If parents refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to An Garda Síochána.
- While incidents occurring outside of school are not the responsibility of the Board of Management, we will endeavour to assist in brokering a solution between parties involved. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

## **Breach of Policy**

Breach of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including but not limited to the following:

- Suspension of network and computer privileges.
- Confiscation of devices if found on school grounds or at school related activities.
- Notification to parents.
- Detention
- Disciplinary sanction (in the case of teachers)
- Legal action and/or prosecution.

## **Success Criteria**

Ensure a safe environment for all our children and protect our staff members.  
Increase awareness among the children and staff about appropriate use of social media and respect each other's privacy.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years or earlier if necessary.

## **Implementation**

This policy was ratified by the Chairperson on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and published on our school website.

Signed: *Feicin Mulkerin* (Chairperson)

Signed: *Laura Griffin* (Principal)

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

\*Please note the original signed copy is located in the school policy folder in the office