

Social Media Policy

February 2024

Policy Document



Belclare National School

Social Media Policy

Introduction

This social media Policy was drafted in January 2024 and published on the school website.

Rationale

SN an Croí Ró Naofa recognises respect as its core ethos. To that end, the school has developed a Social Media Policy that upholds the rights of its stakeholders to enjoy their education and working lives free from the intrusion of social media, online bullying, empowering students and staff to access social media free from online intrusion and bullying etc, or harassment or any kind. Definitions of online bullying are included in the appendices.

SN an Croí Ró Naofa recognises that its stakeholders, including but not limited to, teachers, students and parents engage with social media applications. These applications include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Blogs, and other online tools through which people connect and share information.

All members of the SN an Croí Ró Naofa community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all Social Media interactions. Staff, students and parents will act in a manner that supports the schools mission and ethos and will not engage in online activity that brings the image of SN an Croí Naofa into disrepute or in any way harms members of the school community.

Therefore, it is expected SN an Croí Ró Naofa staff, students and parents use social media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social Media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or to misrepresent the school or any member of the school community.

Aims

The aim of the social media Policy is to set standards of behaviour for the use of Social Media that are consistent with the values and expectations of the school. SN an Croí Ró Naofa aims to protect the safety and wellbeing of students, teachers and the school community. If there is a breach of the school's Social Media Policy the school will undertake disciplinary action inline with the school discipline policy, dignity at work, the Teaching Council Code of professional conduct for teachers and anti-bullying policy and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to Gardaí where the school is required to do so.

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, X (formally known as twitter), LinkedIn, TikTok, Google+, KIK, Instagram, SMS, YouTube and includes emails and mobile devices.

Please see appendix 1 for more detailed definitions

Rights and Responsibilities

Staff, students and parents are expected to show respect to all members of the school community.

Staff will: Plan for the inclusion of cyber safety awareness within the curriculum with guidance from relevant education authorities. A Cyber safety talk will be organised on a Biannual basis.

Parents will: Be responsible for being aware of and informed about their children's online activity and be proactive in the supervision and guidance of their children taking into account this policy and in particular the school's core values.

STUDENT GUIDELINES

When using social media, students are expected to ensure that they:

- Read and agree to the terms and conditions of various social media sites as many of them have age restrictions for their use. E.g. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Gmail are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above. WhatsApp has age restriction of 16.
- Are aware of what they are posting online and that Social Media sites and applications are public forums.
- Are not permitted to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If students attempt to do this, the member of staff is to refuse the student access and inform the Principal. The student's parents will be informed if this happens.
- Will not access social networking sites during the school day.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.
- Do not bully, intimidate abuse, harass or threaten other members of the school community.
- Do not make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the school community.
- Do not harm the reputation of the school or those within its community.
- Do not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the SN an Croí Ró Naofa community (student, parents or staff) in the course of their working/school day without the express permission of the staff member of parents/guardians of the other children.

- Do not upload any video or photographs of any student where they can be identified as a student of the school by their uniform or any other means.

PARENT GUIDELINES

X (formally known as twitter) and other Social Media tools open up communication between students, parents and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a large impact on learning of SN an Croí Ró Naofa. The school encourages parents to participate in such activities when appropriate but requests that parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

Parents should:

- Be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions that **DO HAVE** implications for their primary aged children. Parents need to monitor their children's online social media activity and read the terms and conditions of various Social Media sites and applications their children are interested in using. Parents need to be aware that many of them have age restrictions for their use. E.g. Facebook, Instagram and Gmail are all restricted to those **13 years of age and above**.
- 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.
- Before uploading photos, audio or video, parents need to seek appropriate permission from any individual involved. This most particularly applies in relation to the privacy of the students and staff of SN an Croí Ró Naofa.
- Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- Be conscious of the fact that expert advice given is that all users of Social Media sites should do whatever they can to not identify any child by name or associate them with a particular school.
- Parents should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regard to the school community and its members.
- Parents assisting with classroom activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.

STAFF AND TEACHER GUIDELINES

Social Media in relation to staff and teacher relates to blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video, instant messaging and mobile devices.

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram must not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.
- Staff should not accept students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.

- Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.
- Staff are advised to NOT accept ex-students or parents of current students as friends on personal Social Media sites.
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- While staff have permission to post photographs of students to the school website, they do not have permission to post details that would identify any child.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online. Staff need to be mindful that what they publish will be public for a long time.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. If staff identify themselves online as affiliated with the school, then they need to be aware that they are by definition representing the entire school community. Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school.
- Staff should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regard to the school community and its members.
- When contributing online, staff should not post confidential student information.
- Staff should visit their profile's security and privacy settings on social networking sites and ensure appropriate security checks are in place.

MANAGING CHANGE AND ISSUES ARISING

- We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the school community has a concern or question pertaining to social media or Social Networking sites, this should be directed to the Principal.
- Parents, students or staff who have a complaint or issue arise from social media should contact the principal.

Review and Implementation

The social media Policy is available on the school's website.

The social media Policy was formally approved by the Board of Management at its meeting on

21/02/2024

Sarah Molloy

Chairperson

Board of Management

Agnes Martyn

Principal

21/02/2024

Date

21/02/2024

Date

Appendices

DEFINITIONS

Social Media Social networking sites: are websites that allow you to create a personal profile about yourself and then chat and share information with others such as family and friends.

Video, audio and photo sharing websites: are sites that allow you to upload and share videos, sounds and photos which can be viewed/heard by web users the world over eg, Flickr, YouTube, iTunes U, Vimeo, SoundCloud

Blog: A blog (short for web log) is a kind of online diary, where you regularly post about your life, your passions, business, news or other interests. It is a way of having your own space in the virtual world eg, WordPress, Blogger

Microblogging apps: are websites that post micro-blog like posts to announce what you are currently doing eg, Twitter, Tumblr

Location-based apps: (also known as *Geolocation*) are applications with the capability to detect and record where you and other people are located

Wikis: are websites where users create, edit and share information about a particular subject or topic eg, Wikipedia, Wikispaces

Online gaming: are games played over some form of computer network and are often based around a community of users eg, Steam

News aggregation: news aggregators provide a list of the latest news stories published by users from a range of different web sites eg, Digg

Ning: an online platform for people and organisations to create custom social networks around specific interests. Ning offers the ability to create an invited closed community website with a customised appearance and feel, feature sets such as forums, blogs, photos, and videos

Forums or message boards: are online discussion sites where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages

Online multiplayer gaming platforms: are multiplayer video games which are capable of supporting hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously and usually feature at least one persistent world (e.g. World of Warcraft)

Definitions of online bullying.

The following list outlines some prevalent forms of cyberbullying. However, it is essential to note that this compilation is not exhaustive.

Online bullying, also known as cyberbullying, refers to the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet, messaging groups and social media platforms, to harass, shame, intimidate, or harm individuals or groups. It spreads harmful content, often intending to embarrass, threaten, or humiliate the target. Cyberbullying can take various forms, and it can occur among children, teenagers, or adults.

Typical forms of online bullying include:

Harassment: Persistent, unwanted, and aggressive online behaviour, which may involve sending threatening messages or repeatedly targeting an individual.

Impersonation: Creating fake profiles or using someone else's identity to deceive and harass others.

Flaming: Engaging in online arguments, often in a hostile and insulting manner, to provoke emotional reactions.

Outing and Trickery: Sharing someone's private information, secrets, or embarrassing details without their consent or tricking them into revealing sensitive information.

Exclusion: Deliberately excluding an individual from online conversations, chats, groups, or activities, often to isolate and alienate them.

Doxing: Publishing private or sensitive information about an individual, such as their address or phone number, with malicious intent.

Denigration: Posting or spreading false and harmful information about someone or an organisation to damage their reputation.

Cyberstalking: Engaging in persistent, unwanted online attention or monitoring of an individual, often to instil fear, discomfort, or embarrassment.