

# Social Media Policy and Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many, both adults and children alike. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This document gives clarity to the way in which social media are to be used by pupils and school staff at Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche.

## Social Media

There are five key areas

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
- B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.
- C. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.
- D. Comments posted by parents/carers.
- E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.

### **A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.**

The school's 'Rialacha Órga do Theagmháil Slán ar an Idirlíon' makes it clear to pupils that use of social media within school is not allowed.

The school e-safety policy states sanctions for breaching the policy.

### **B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them **to protect their professional reputation** by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must never add pupils as friends into their personal accounts.
- Staff must not post pictures of school events without the Principal's consent.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within working hours.
- Staff need to use social networking in an appropriate manner and in a way that does not put their professional reputation into question.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff must not post negative comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including Governors.
- Staff should read and comply with the school eSafety Policy.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Principal.

### **C. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.**

All social media services must be approved by the Principal in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

### **D. Comments posted by parents/carers.**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking via the school eSafety Policy. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters, verbal discussion and the private school Facebook group run by 'Cairde BBB'.

- Parents are not expected to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

### **E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

The school Anti Bullying Policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear. Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate any member of the school community, be that pupil, staff member or parent/family member. would be covered by this irrespective of when/where the post was made.

## Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records (The Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS 2007). **Photographs of pupils should, where possible, be taken with a school camera/iPad and images stored on a centralised area on the school network/password protected internet storage, accessible only to teaching staff.**

### **Procedures**

- Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche will seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders every September as a part of their data collection procedure. Photographs will be stored on the school network which is password protected until the school ceases to operate, should this occur then all photographs will be shredded or deleted from the school network.
- The school's digital cameras must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit). Photographs are printed in the setting by staff and images are then removed from the camera memory.
- Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and learning and displayed in school and in albums or a child's development records for children and parent carers, governors, ETI and EA officials to look through.

- Often photographs may contain other children in the background.
- Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending. Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites. (See Policy above).
- Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school. **Visitors may only use their phones outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.**

## Use of Mobile Phones

### **Pupils**

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones at school or on school trips
- Mobile phones brought into school without permission will be confiscated and must be collected by the parent.
- if in the very rare event of parents wishing for his or her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact a parent after school:
  - the parent must put their request in writing to the class teacher.
  - the phone must be handed in, switched off, to the class teacher first thing in the morning and collected from the teacher at home time. (The phone is left at the owner's own risk.)

### **Staff**

- staff must have their mobile phones on silent or switched off during class time or in the school playground when on duty.
- staff must not use the school phone to take or make calls during class time or in the school playground when on duty.
- staff may not make or receive calls or texts on their mobile during teaching time. If there are extreme circumstances the member of staff will have made the principal aware of this and can have their phones on in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- use of phones must be limited to non-contact time when no children are present.
- phones should be kept out of sight when staff are with children.
- phones will never be used to take photographs of children or to store their personal data.
- staff should never allow students to have access to their personal mobile phone number. If contact should be necessary e.g. on a school trip, this will be made via the school office or by the member of staff with the school mobile phone. In an emergency a teacher may use his/her mobile phone to make direct contact.