

Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche



Social Media Policy

Social media plays an important role in the lives of many people, including children. We recognise that social networking can bring many benefits, but there are also potential risks and we have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

The aim of this document is to give clarity to the way in which social media sites are to be used by the Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche community: pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and other volunteers. All members of the school community should bear in mind that information they share through social media and networks, even if it is on private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and defamation laws.

Key roles and responsibilities

- The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy and procedures of Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche.
- The Board of Governors has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds
- The Board of Governors has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
- The Principal will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures of Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche.
- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Social Media Policy and for ensuring pupils do so also whilst in school.
- Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child /children at home.
- Parents and carers will be expected to promote safe and responsible social media behaviour.

Guidelines for pupils

- Pupils should not access social networking sites whilst at school. Pupils and parents are reminded that the use of most social media sites is inappropriate for primary aged pupils.
- Pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse, or defame other pupils, any member of staff or school in any way that brings disrespect to our school or individuals.
- Pupils and the wider school community should not post images or videos of other pupils, staff or members of our school community taken within school or at school events/trips on any social media site without prior permission from the school.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in sanctions being administered in accordance with those detailed in our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Guidelines for staff

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking accounts. It is important that they protect their professional reputation, and that of the school, by ensuring that they use their personal sites in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be advised as follows:

- That they familiarise themselves with social network sites' privacy settings in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended
- It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set to 'friends only', irrespective of use/purpose
- That they do not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:
 - Bring the school into disrepute;
 - Lead to valid parental complaints;
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees;
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors
 - Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children
 - Contravene the school Code of Conduct for Staff
- Members of staff must not "friend" or otherwise contact parents/carers through social media if their only contact with these parents is as a result of their position within the school. This could lead to professional relationships being compromised. Staff will not accept "friend" requests if the relationship is purely staff/parent, and there is no previous or alternative relationship.
- That they do not form online friendships or enter into online communication with pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised, and/or safeguarding allegations being raised
- That they should not post pictures of (without the Principal's consent) or negative comments about school events. Posting derogatory comments about pupils, parents or colleagues is never acceptable. Staff are required to uphold the reputation of the school, to maintain high standards in their own behaviour, and to uphold public trust in their profession.
- Teachers may not access social media during lesson time.
- That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Principal.

Guidelines for Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media via this policy (in particular when their child joins the school), available on the school website.
- Parents should not post pictures (taken on school premises or at a school event) of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites. In general, photographs, videos or any image of pupils, staff or any member of our school community must not be published on a personal or public web space without prior permission from the school.
- Parents should not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame other pupils, any member of staff or the school.
- Parents should raise queries, concerns or make complaints through official school channels. (In accepting a place at Naíscoil agus Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche for their child, parents are agreeing to abide by the policies, practices and procedures of the school.)

Dealing with incidents of online (cyber) bullying

All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and our ICT and Online Safety Policy. The school may take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- Poses a threat to a member of the school community
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school, or its employees/governors

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, is strictly prohibited, irrespective of when/where the post was made.

Be SMART Online

Using the Irish language version 'FOCAS', we encourage pupils to take a SMART approach to social media behaviour:

- **Safe** – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online. Follow age restriction rules.
- **Meeting** – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents / carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.
- **Accepting** – We advise that pupils only accept emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.
- **Reliable** – We teach pupils about the dangers of believing everything they see online.
- **Tell** – We encourage pupils to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography

Children have their photographs taken in school for a number of reasons, including to celebrate school events and pupil achievements. They are also regularly taken to provide evidence of their learning for their development records (The Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS 2007). **Photographs of pupils should always, 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/relevant school staff.**

Procedures

- Naíscoil agus 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 C2K network, which is password protected.
- School's cameras/iPads must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit).
- 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.**

Review

Unless any other changes are required, the school Social Media Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Máire Uí Bhuadáin

ICT coordinator