

1. Introduction

Social Media Policy

Social networking is everywhere. It is common to find parents, children, co-workers and others on such sites. Examples of these sites include, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat etc.

With social networks people across the world have access to tools and options that were previously only imaginable. However, there are now just as many new opportunities to connect as there are to get into potential trouble.

One thing we often forget while having fun on social networks is that almost anybody can see what we are doing. Whilst we are tagging photos of our friends or are posting comments to them, it can be easy to forget that someone else who has been invited onto a social networking site can also view them. Often there is a minimal amount of control over who ultimately gets to see our post.

In an age of increasing use of social media, CPS embraces the benefits and positives that can be achieved with this technology.

Due to the speed the digital world is changing and evolving we accept that it will be difficult to keep on top of all potential issues that could arise. Considerable thought has been put into how we use and manage it in order to minimise the risk of potential harm/upset.

Social media has proven itself as an invaluable tool for communication and education and to fail to embrace it is to be left behind by modern society.

In our school we will use the following forms of Social Media:

Whole School Twitter

Whole School Facebook

PTA Facebook

School website

Once something appears on the Internet, it's almost impossible to remove. Social networking

users need to take a step back and think about what they are posting onto the Internet as it can have serious ramifications.

Parents are reminded that they are responsible for their children's use of social media outside of school. They should be aware of the age restrictions regarding particular forms of social media, for example, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp state clearly that their registered users should be at least 13 years of age.

This policy serves to convey the guidelines which members of our school community in Carryduff P.S. should operate within.

2.0 Social Networking Tools

2.1 Whole School Twitter

Twitter in general has proven itself as an excellent tool for distributing information to parents in the form of factual updates, practical advice, marketing, community links and general fun!

It's also an excellent way to celebrate pupil success- children love to see themselves on the Twitter feed!

Parents interact with both the school and each other on a whole range of school-related issues whilst local politicians and community groups etc. keep up with our various events.

2.2 Whole School Facebook

Facebook in general has proven itself as an excellent tool for distributing information to parents in the form of factual updates, practical advice, marketing, community links and general fun!

Parents can interact with both the school and each other on a whole range of school-related issues whilst local politicians and community groups etc. keep up with our various events.

This has also proven to be an excellent means of contacting parents en-mass with informal announcements or reminders. All precautions are taken to ensure the associated risks with Facebook are minimised.

2.3 PTA Facebook

Although not an official school page the PTA run a very successful Facebook Group. This is a closed group and whilst managed by the PTA all content is carefully screened and kept

appropriate.

This has also proven to be an excellent means of contacting parents en-mass with informal announcements or reminders. All precautions are taken to ensure the associated risks with Facebook are minimised.

As per DE and union advice, staff are not permitted to be members of the PTA Facebook Group; the only exception is the school Principal who keeps a regular watch on the content and appropriateness of all posts. This also enables the Principal to make contributions such as announcements and updates etc.

. 3.0 User Roles and Responsibilities

. 3.1 Staff Responsibilities

People who work with children and young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid improper contact or relationships and respect their position of trust.

With regard to relationships, individuals who work with children and young people should not attempt to establish a relationship, which might include:

Communication of a personal nature;

Inappropriate dialogue through the internet;

Sharing of personal contact details including email address, online identity or phone numbers;

The sending of emails or text messages of an inappropriate nature.

Individuals who work with children and young people should be extremely careful in corresponding with others on social networking sites.

Staff relationships with children and young people should, at all times, remain professional and they should **not** correspond with children and young people through such sites or add them as 'friends'.

It is worth bearing in mind that, on such sites, an inappropriate or even misconstrued communication may have the potential to impact upon their careers, or even result in a

criminal investigation.

In addition, staff should bear in mind **who** may access their own profiles on such websites. Staff should therefore take care as to the information they display about themselves, their personal lives and should **not make any reference to school or individuals within it.**

They **should not** disclose on their online profile, *'where they work'*, and at no time should they post anything of a lewd/explicit/racist/discriminatory etc. nature or any other action which is capable of bringing the school into disrepute.

They should also ensure that they have installed, and are using, the highest level of privacy settings.

Individuals, who work with children and young people, should not make, view or access illegal or inappropriate images of children.

Individuals who work with children and young people and others, with whom they may be in a position of trust, should exercise caution when using social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind.

Staff should not post any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities without prior permission from the Principal.

Before posting any images of school community members taken at events not related to school, for example at social events, permission should be directly sought from the parties involved.

3.2 Parental Responsibilities

Parents and Guardians will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking by the school. They will be provided with a copy of this policy and given the opportunity to respond/consult on it.

Parents should not make reference to any pupil or member of staff on their social networking accounts. They should also not engage in online 'gossip' regarding school issues.

Complaints made in public through social media are detrimental and could be damaging to the school community and as such are not beneficial to the children. Parents/carers should bear this in mind before posting such complaints online.

Any complaints, should they arise, should be pursued through the appropriate channels by making contact with the member of staff involved, or the Principal. As per the Complaints Policy, a meeting can then be arranged at a mutually convenient time to bring about a resolution to the issue.

Parents/ carers should also be aware that defamatory comments are unlawful and may result in legal action.

4.0 Social Media Online Safety Precautions and Codes of Conduct

Safety precautions vary between social media tools and as a result it is essential that we be specific about specific precautions in each area:

4.1

Whole School Twitter

Followers are only permitted if they have a clear link or interest in our school/community.

Acceptable followers might be (non-exhaustive list): Parents, pupils, staff, wider family members, local community bodies, council bodies, politicians, educational bodies etc.

All unrecognised followers are requested to confirm their link/interest to our school. Failure to provide a suitable connection will result in the user being blocked and if appropriate- reported to Twitter.

Parents whose children have left our school may still be followers from a 'community' angle as many of our Tweets are also useful to the wider community. We also value the continued interest of past families.

All 'tweets' and 'retweets' should be school-related and of interest to the followers.

Inappropriate tweets will be removed and reported; the associated users will be blocked and reported.

The school Twitter feed is managed by the ICT Co-coordinator.

Photos of children may be used in line with the '**ICT Acceptable Use Agreement**' however they should never contain pupils' full names.

Any parent reserves the right to have images or content involving their child removed without explanation.

Followers are only permitted if they have a clear link or interest in our school/community.

4.2 Whole School Facebook

The above page is managed and monitored by the Principal (or individual(s) approved by the Principal for that purpose).

Carryduff P.S. will not accept responsibility for comments made or content posted by members of the group without prior permission from the Principal.

All approved members of the group should have appropriate and reasonable connections with the school.

Parents whose children have left our school may still be followers from a 'community' angle as many of our posts are also useful to the wider community. We also value the continued interest of past families.

Pupils are not permitted to be members of the group.

Photos of children may be used in line with the '**ICT Acceptable Use Agreement**' however they should never contain pupils' full names.

Any parent reserves the right to have images or content involving their child removed without explanation.

Members who post inappropriately online may be blocked from accessing the page.

The school Principal (and its Board of Governors) reserves the right to remove any content posted on the above page.

The school Principal (and its Board of Governors) reserve the right to close the Facebook Group at any time.

4.3 PTA Facebook

The above page is managed and monitored by the PTA Committee (or individual(s) approved by the PTA for that purpose).

Carryduff P.S. will not accept responsibility for comments made or content posted by members of the group without prior permission from the Principal.

All approved members of the group should have appropriate and reasonable connections with the school.

Pupils are not permitted to be members of the group.

Staff are not permitted to be members of the group with the exception of the Principal.

Photos of pupils on the above page will not contain any identification. All posts and content should be directly or indirectly school-related.

Members who post inappropriately online may be blocked from accessing the page.

The school Principal (and its Board of Governors) reserves the right to remove any content posted on the above page.

The school Principal (and its Board of Governors) reserve the right to close the PTA Facebook Group at any time.

General Social Media Good Practice Guidelines for Staff

Given the nature of social media and the new ways being invented on an almost daily basis it would not be possible to specify which sites/apps/tools are applicable to this policy. The guidelines here are very general and should cover most situations:

Staff are free to use and access social media.

Staff should not, however, use their personal accounts to post any school-related content such as comments, photos, videos etc.

Staff should not identify the school in any way on their personal Facebook Pages i.e. 'Place of Work' reference etc.

Staff should not name or mention any pupil or colleague using their personal social networking accounts.

Privacy settings should be set appropriately to prevent non-friends from accessing any private or personal information; despite this staff should also be aware that social networking will never be completely private and to avoid complications they should behave online in a similar fashion as they would offline.

5.0 Any personal online activity which brings (or may bring) the school into disrepute may result in the invoking of the Disciplinary Procedure and in the worst cases may result in dismissal.

In line with DE and union advice staff should also endeavour not to be 'friends' (or similar) with parents. There may be occasion for reasonable exception to this guidance for i.e. parents who also work in school as colleagues or existing friends who then enroll pupils in the school. Staff should treat this guidance with caution and be cognisant of the potential complications that may come from social media interaction with parents online.

Staff should not be 'friends' (or similar) with any pupil, past or present, until they reach the approved age of adulthood (18). Staff should also be aware of the potential complications that could arise from such interaction even once an individual reaches the age of 18 and should consider their actions carefully.