



St Mary's R.C. Primary School

Social Media Policy

April 2025

Vision:

We believe that every child is a gift from God, therefore, we aim to provide an outstanding and happy Catholic education which develops the 'whole child' whilst enabling them to reach their full potential.

Mission statement:

We love God ... so we follow the examples of Jesus

We love learning ... so we always do our very best in everything

We love each other ... so we treat each other as we want to be treated

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Overview:

At Saint Mary's, we aim to provide the best education we can for all pupils. Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognize that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at St Mary's RC Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four 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. Comments posted by parents/carers**
- D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

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

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for staff and pupils outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules, therefore, apply to use of social networking sites (see Appendix). Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a Teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. We currently do not allow pupils to use any Social Media sites within school. If a member of staff felt it appropriate, they should consult a member of SLT for permission and then carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child, it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two. However, we do realize that many children access such sites under the age of 13 – including many children at St Mary's.

Many children in school now have their own mobile phones and many have access to social media and friendship/class whatsapp groups. However, at such a young age, many children do not have the maturity to be able to cope with all this. We are now having more and more issues with children falling out online at home, and then bringing these issues into school. We ask parents to think really carefully about what you allow your child access to, and use appropriate filters etc. If you decide to allow your child to use these sites,

can we ask you to please keep a close eye on what your child is doing and having access to.

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 (including past pupils under the age of 16)
- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts
- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use)
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action

Further in depth guidance has been distributed to all staff regarding Do's/Don'ts of using Social Media and Facebook (see Appendix) and staff complete regular training.

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Permission must be sought to share images of another child. Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event. Parents are always reminded of this at whole school events. Parents will be reminded that they should only take individual photographs/share images of their own child, unless they have consent from the parents/carers of any other children

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.

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Headteacher/Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter.

The Governing Body understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession." (National Association of Headteachers)

NB See E Safety Policy also

Outcomes

St. Mary's will have a warm, friendly, welcoming and safe ethos. It will be a place where quality learning takes place which is carefully planned to meet the needs of all learners. We continue to always follow our Mission Statement and treat others as we would like to be treated. We will respond to any form of inappropriate behaviour by staff, parents or pupils to ensure the safety and happiness of all.

Date: November 2018, reviewed April 2020,
reviewed May 2023, April 2025

Signed: Chair of Curriculum Committee

Appendices

Staff, Governor and Visitor Acceptable Use Agreement / Code of Conduct

ICT and the related technologies such as email, the internet and mobile devices are an expected part of our daily working life in school. This policy is designed to ensure that all staff are aware of their professional responsibilities when using any form of ICT. All staff are expected to sign this policy and adhere at all times to its contents. Any concerns or clarification should be discussed with Mr Jenkins, St Mary's RC Primary School ESafety coordinator or Mrs Ruane, Headteacher.

- I will only use the school's email / Internet / Intranet and any related technologies for professional purposes or for uses deemed 'reasonable' by the Head or Governing Body
- I will comply with the ICT system security and not disclose any passwords provided to me by the school or other related authorities
- I will ensure that all electronic communications with pupils and staff are compatible with my professional role
- I will not give out my own personal details, such as mobile phone number and personal email address, to pupils
- I will only use the approved, secure email system(s) for any school business
- I will ensure that personal data (such as data held on SIMS) is kept secure and is used appropriately, whether in school, taken off the school premises or accessed remotely. Personal data can only be taken out of school or accessed remotely when authorised by the Head or Governing Body
- I will not install any hardware or software without permission of the SLT
- I will not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory
- Images of pupils and/or staff will only be taken, stored and used for professional purposes in line with school policy and with written consent of the parent, carer or staff member. Images will not be distributed outside the school network without the permission of the parent/ carer, member of staff or Headteacher
- I understand that all my use of the Internet and other related technologies can be monitored and logged and can be made available, on request, to my Line Manager or Headteacher
- I will support the school approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset or offend any member of the school community
- I will respect copyright and intellectual property rights
- I will ensure that my online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring my professional role into disrepute
- I will support and promote the school's e-Safety policy and help pupils to be safe and responsible in their use of ICT and related technologies
- I understand this forms part of the terms and conditions set out in my contract of employment
- I will only use my mobile phone (or Applewatch) at break times and away from pupils. I will not leave my phone where pupils can access it.
- I will not use my phone to take photographs of pupils, only school ipads.

User Signature

I agree to follow this code of conduct and to support the safe use of ICT throughout the school

Signature Date

Full Name (printed) Job title

Primary Pupil Acceptable Use

Agreement / E-Safety Rules

- ✓ will only use ICT in school for school purposes
- ✓ I will only use my class email address or my own school email address when emailing
- ✓ I will only open email attachments from people I know, or who my Teacher has approved
- ✓ I will not tell other people my ICT passwords
- ✓ I will only open/delete my own files
- ✓ I will make sure that all ICT contact with other children and adults is responsible, polite and sensible
- ✓ I will not deliberately look for, save or send anything that could be unpleasant or nasty. If I accidentally find anything like this I will tell my Teacher immediately
- ✓ I will not give out my own details such as my name, phone number or home address. I will not arrange to meet someone unless this is part of a school project approved by my Teacher and a responsible adult comes with me
- ✓ I will be responsible for my behaviour when using ICT because I know that these rules are to keep me safe
- ✓ I will support the school approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset any member of the school community
- ✓ I know that my use of ICT can be checked and that my parent/carers will be contacted if a member of school staff is concerned about my eSafety

Parents,

By sending your child to our school, we expect you to follow this code and ensure your child understands and adheres to it.

ICT including the internet, email and mobile technologies, etc has become an important part of learning in our school. We expect all children to be safe and responsible when using any ICT.

Please read and discuss these eSafety rules with your child and return the slip at the bottom of this page. If you have any concerns or would like some explanation please contact Mrs Ruane

This KeyDoc is featured in the article 'Facebook for teachers: cheat sheet' on 'The Key'. To read the article, visit <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com> and enter the article title in the search box.

10 rules for teachers on Facebook

1. Change your display name – use your first and middle name, use a maiden name, or put your surname backwards instead
2. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, ensure that the image is professional
3. Check your privacy settings regularly
4. Be careful tagging other staff members in images or posts
5. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be just as happy showing your pupils
6. Don't use social media sites in school hours
7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, your school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there
8. Don't associate yourself with your school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)
9. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts – anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile phone number) is able to find you using this information
10. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone – the app recognises wi-fi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same wi-fi connection (such as parents or pupils)

Check your privacy settings

- Change the visibility of your posts and photos to '**Friends only**', rather than 'Friends of friends'. Otherwise pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they're friends with anybody on your contacts list
- Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos** – go to bit.ly/2MdQXMN to find out how to limit the visibility of previous posts
- The public may still be able to see posts you've '**liked**', even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster

- **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public. Facebook also has a setting that allows you to see what your profile looks like to other people, including specific friends and people searching for your name – go to bit.ly/2vJXvJ0 to find out how to do this)
- Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people can't **search for you by name** – go to bit.ly/2nC3I59 to find out how to do this
- Remember that **some information is always public**: your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender
- Please note that potential Employers can do online or Facebook searches on you when applying for a post.

What to do if...

A pupil adds you on social media

- In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile
- Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture
- If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, remind them of your school's social media policy (if you have one), or tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents
- If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages
- Notify your senior leadership team (SLT) or Headteacher about what is happening

A parent adds you on social media

- It is at your discretion, in accordance with your school's social media policy, whether to respond. Bear in mind that:
- Responding to one parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other teachers at the school
- Pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in
- If you wish to decline the offer or ignore a message, consider drafting a stock response (either individually or as a school) to let the parent know why you're doing so

You're being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

- **Do not** retaliate or respond in any way
- Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred

- Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it
- If the perpetrator is a current school pupil or staff member, the school's own mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents
- If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address their concerns, address any reasonable complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material
- If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or someone from the school should consider contacting the police