

Dunclug Primary School



# Social Media Policy

*Created: August 2018*

## **RATIONALE**

*“Social media provides an excellent vehicle for communicating directly with parents/carers and the wider community. An increasing number of schools now have their own social media accounts. However, most social media platforms have a recommended 13-years lower age limit which would rule out the direct use of social media for primary school pupils. While many younger pupils will not be able to engage in social media directly, making them aware that the school and their parents/carers are interacting via social media gives them the opportunity to see that social media can be extremely positive when used in a responsible manner.”*

**DENI- Online Safety, Circular number 2016/27, Issue date 01 December 2016**

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another; current common examples include social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principals that Dunclug Primary School staff and associates are expected to follow when using social media. It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's use of social media, ensuring the reputation of the school/children/staff is safeguarded at all times.

## **SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to Dunclug Primary School's governing body, all teaching and other staff, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are all collectively referred to as staff members in the policy.

This policy works in conjunction with the E-Safety Policy which covers the staff's personal use of social media in relation to interaction with any persons associated with the school, as well as the use of social media for official school purposes; including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

This policy applies to Dunclug Primary School's social media sites Facebook and Twitter. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Social Networking refers to the use of Facebook and Twitter to promote the school and share events and news about whole school life. The school upholds their legal responsibility to deny access to social networking sites to pupils at all times.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

Users of the Dunclug Primary School social media accounts should be aware that the disclosure of confidential or commercially or politically sensitive information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws. Staff members must also be aware it is potentially a breach of professional codes of conduct.

Staff members and users should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As educators, we believe that the partnership of parent and school is intrinsic to realising the best educational outcomes for our pupils. This policy outlines the context of social media and the responsibilities that staff and parents have in role modelling effective and safe communication on social media.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR**

For the foreseeable future, the school principal will undertake the role of social media coordinator and will update and maintain both accounts. As part of this role, the principal will train staff on acceptable use of social media and will monitor those given access to the accounts.

Should any breach of the social media pledge or complaints come to their attention the principal will launch an investigation and take appropriate action through consultation with the Board of Governors.

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

### **THE PRINCIPAL AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM:**

The Principal and other members of the SLT will be informed about social media incidents and will have direct access to the Facebook and Twitter accounts. The Principal will deal with any serious social media allegation being made against the school by a member of staff or public.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff receive suitable training to enable them to carry out their social media roles and to train other colleagues, as relevant.

## GOVERNORS

Governors are responsible for the approval of the Social Media Policy and for reviewing the effectiveness of the policy. This will be carried out by the Governors receiving regular information about social media incidents and monitoring reports.

## TEACHING AND SUPPORT STAFF

Individuals who work with children and young people should be extremely careful in corresponding on social media 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 as Facebook and Twitter 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 criminal investigation.

Staff should not post any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities. All images and posts/tweets will be put live via the social media team.

## PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians need to use the internet/mobile devices in an appropriate way and to support the Social Media Policy outlined by the school. They will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking by the school. They will receive a copy of this policy and a pledge which will be signed and returned before gaining access to the accounts. Pictures of children will not be posted on social networking sites without parent's permission.

The policy will not only confirm their responsibilities, but also make them aware that they should notify the school, in writing, should they disagree with its content.

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/Guardians should bear this in mind regarding any comments made online. Any complaints, should they arise, should be pursued through the appropriate channels by making contact with the school.

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

No pupil should be accessing social media account or have a live Facebook or Twitter account; should you find a child on either site it is your duty of care to inform the school. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen.

[http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show\\_form=underage](http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage)

Parents/Guardians should uphold their responsibility that no child under the age of 13 has access to a personal Facebook or Twitter account.

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**Any breach of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy, this may result in action being undertaken against the person(s) involved.**

**A breach of this policy will be considered a serious disciplinary offence which is also defamatory to the school's ethos and principles.**

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. This may result in a change of organisation, method or content as required. The review will be achieved through consultation with pupils and parents, staff and Governors and with reference to any changes in legislation or Departmental Policy.

## APPENDIX

### Social Media Pledge



**Dunclug Primary School**  
**Social Media Pledge**



Name of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

I pledge to:

- Use Facebook and Twitter in a courteous and respectful way
- Inform school about any concerns to do with shared posts, tweets or comments
- Not be derogatory to any member of staff, pupil or parent
- Never bring the school name into disrepute
- Never post or tweet information about private personal issues
- Never post or tweet information about personal grievances

Parent/Carer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_