



## *SHS Social Media Policy (Draft)*

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### **Introduction**

This social media policy was a collaborative school process, involving teachers, staff, Parents Council, the Principal and the Board of Management 2019.

### **Rationale**

Sacred Heart School, Tullamore (hereafter the school) recognises that teachers, students and parents engage with social media. These include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, Blogs and other online tools through which people connect and share information.

All members of the school community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all Social Media interactions. Staff, students and parents are expected to not act in such a way that the image of the school is brought into disrepute or in a way that harms members of the school community.

We wish to ensure all information pertaining to the school community remains secure and is not compromised through the misuse of Social Media.

Therefore, it is expected that school staff, students and parents of students use Social Media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social Media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or misrepresent the school or any member of the school community.

### **Aims**

The aim of the Social Media Policy is to set standards of behaviour for the use of Social Media that are consistent with the values and expectations of the school, which aim to protect the safety, wellbeing and reputation of students, teachers and the school community. All breaches of the school's Social Media Policy will be dealt with on a case by case basis having regard to the issues involved.

All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to Gardai where the school is required to do so. The school may regard abuses in this category, occurring outside the school with the same seriousness as if they had occurred during school time and may deal with them in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

## **Student Responsibilities**

When using Social Media, students are expected to ensure they:

- Read and observe the terms and conditions of various social media sites about age restrictions for their use
- Read and observe the conditions set out in the school's Internet Safety Charter (see Appendix 1)
- Read and observe the conditions set out in school's Acceptable Usage Policy (see Appendix 2).
- Are aware of what they are posting online, and that social media sites and applications are public forums.
- Do not join a staff member's areas on networking sites.
- Do not access social networking sites during the school day.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.
- Do not bully, intimidate, harass or threaten other members of the school community.
- Do not make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or other members of the school community.
- Do not harm the reputation of the school or those within its community.
- Do not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the school community.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

- One Note, Edmodo, student and staff emails and other IT platforms open communication between parents, students and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a positive impact on communication systems and learning in the Sacred Heart School.
- The school encourages parents to fully understand how these systems operate and that parents use them respectfully and within the guidelines set out for usage in SHS Acceptable Usage Policy and SHS Email Etiquette (see Appendix 3)
- Monitor their daughter's online activity and the apps that are downloaded on her phone.
- Be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their daughter to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- Attend the annual SHS talk on Digital Safety.
- Understand online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- Do not spread false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information about the School.

## **Staff and Teacher Responsibilities**

(Social Media in relation to staff and teacher relates to blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video, instant messaging and mobile devices.)

- Social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram etc) should not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.
- Staff should not accept students as friends on their own social networking sites or interact with students on social networking sites.
- Staff should not seek out students as friends on social networking sites.
- If a parent makes contact with a staff member through social media, the staff member should not respond and report to Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.
- Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.
- Staff are advised not to accept ex-students or parents of current students as friends on personal Social Media sites.
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- While staff have permission to post photographs of students to the school website (through staff member with responsibility for PR) they do not have permission to post details etc. All postings must go through personnel.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online. Staff need to be mindful that what they publish will remain public indefinitely.
- The lines between public and private, professional and personal are blurred in the online world. Staff should not identify themselves online as working in the Sacred Heart School Tullamore. Staff should take great care to avoid the possibility of material they post on social media being misinterpreted in ways that reflect negatively on the school or on members of the schools' community.
- When contributing online, staff must not post confidential student or school information.
- Staff should review their profile's security and privacy settings on social networking sites. At a minimum, staff should have all privacy settings set to "friends only".
- All employees of the school shall read and understand this Social Media Policy. Training and information on the policy will be provided as part of induction and general awareness activities.
- All teaching staff shall read and understand the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct.

### **Vicarious Liability**

The school is aware that it may be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment or discrimination carried out by employees on social media sites even if those acts were carried out without the Board of Management's consent or knowledge. Actions can include defamation of students/parents, third parties or employees.

Social network users who identify themselves online as employees of Sacred Heart School Tullamore, shall ensure that any personal social media accounts or other personal posts contain disclaimers that make it clear that the opinions expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent the views of the school.

### **Managing Change**

We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the school community has a concern or question pertaining to Social Media or Social Networking sites, this should be directed to the Principal.

**Parents, students or staff who have a complaint or issue arising from Social Media should contact the Principal (0579321747 or [P.mckenna@shstullamore.ie](mailto:P.mckenna@shstullamore.ie))**