Salesian Secondary College

Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick.

POLICY & PROCEDURES RELATING TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION.

(Formerly "Policy and Procedures relating to Social Media and (Electronic) Communication between Staff and Students")

INTRODUCTION

We currently live in a digital age in which social media has become a powerful set of communication tools. These are changing the way we teach, learn and interact with one another. The collective sharing of material, views or comments with a large cohort of individuals was never so easy. These resources if harnessed constructively can be hugely beneficial in the educational field. As a school community we are committed to developing the technological and communication skills of our students.

Definition

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.

Social Media is the term commonly used for websites or internet applications that allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Websites such as Facebook, Snapchat, Ask.fm, and MySpace are perhaps the most well-known examples of Social Media sites but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, video and audio podcasts, wikis, message boards, photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube and micro blogging services such as Twitter. Social Media can also include online games, on which players can communicate with each other in written message, through headphones or through shared experiences of the game online.

This definition of Social Media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day.

Rationale

Unfortunately there is scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of Social Media sites which can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity while online. This policy has been developed to offer guidance and direction to all members of the school community on the safe and responsible use of Social Media. This is also a reference document for victims of inappropriate or unsolicited comments online.

This policy was developed in the context of our Child Safeguarding Statement, Child Protection Guidelines 2017 and the Looking at Our Schools document.

Relation to Mission Statement

This policy has been developed in line with the school's mission statement which advocates a safe and caring learning environment for students and staff. As the school embraces new technologies of the digital age there is an increasing need to raise awareness around respect for the individual and the safety of those engaging with these communication tools.

Aims

· This policy aims to:
- Produce a set of strategies for students that will allow them to use Social Media safely and responsibly.
- · Protect the integrity and good name of all members of the school community from online abuse.
- · Outline behaviours which are unacceptable and the consequences for engaging in these.
- · Provide guidance for staff and students on the appropriate use of Social Media.
- · Outline procedures for school community members who find themselves the victims of inappropriate social media behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to the entire school community – management, teachers, other staff, pupils and parents/guardians. Due to the diverse nature of access to Social Media it relates to all such interactions both during and outside of normal school hours and includes the use of school and personal devices also.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Board of Management will approve the policy and ensure its development and evaluation.
2. The Principal and Deputy Principal will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy and the application of consequences.
3. Class Tutors will outline unacceptable uses of Social Media to students and advising them of safe internet use.
4. Class Tutors will be aware of the signs and possibilities of Bullying within their groups.
5. Strategies to ensure online safety will be taught as part of the SPHE anti-bullying programme.
6. Subject Teachers will report any incidents of online bullying and be mindful of their obligations under Child protection Guidelines.
7. The Guidance Counsellor and Care Team will provide support for students who have been victims of online bullying.
8. Parents / Guardians are responsible for monitoring their child's online behaviour and their child's use of smart devices and the home internet supply; the amount of time spent online, the nature of interaction, images sent or stored etc.
9. The student carries the responsibility that comes with her / his rights to engage in online behaviour ie he / she must be aware of risk and must take protective measures, so that he / she does not leave himself / herself vulnerable to negative consequences. A student who has a negative online experience must consider:
10. Decreasing the amount of time spent online
11. Blocking a correspondent

12. Deleting an account which has attracted negative attention
13. Monitoring the content of his / her posts
14. Engaging in face to face conservation, facilitated by a caring adult, when online conflict arises

Safe and Responsible use of Social Media

In the social media world the line between private and public is not well defined nor is the line between personal and professional.

1. Be selective about what you share. Everything online happens in front of a vast, invisible, and often anonymous audience. Once something is out there, it doesn't go away as it can be copied and forwarded easily and quickly. Everything leaves a digital footprint. You should never post personal details such as your phone number, email address or home address.

2. Be selective with friends. Be careful who you make friends with online. In general it is better to restrict friends to people you know and trust in the real world.

3. Never post your location. Facebook lets users post their location on every post. Teens should never post their location or any personal details, for safety and privacy reasons. This includes pictures of school uniform, school crest etc, which can be used to identify the age and location of a young person. Teens can also "tag" their friends' location but you can prevent anyone from tagging your location in the "How Tags Work section."

4. Use strict privacy settings. Review all of the options on your privacy settings page. Many sites default settings tend to keep information public until a user makes it private (although Facebook is a little stricter with minors' accounts). "Friends Only" is a good choice for most items, but you can be even more selective.

5. If your profile is linked to your mobile phone, you should use the website's privacy settings to ensure that your phone number is not visible.

6. Chat & VoIP services. (These allow for communication that may be typed or spoken with or without webcam access) When using the above you should only communicate with people you trust and remember that other people may be able to view all aspects of the communication.

7. Adults in contact with pupils should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.

8. Think of what content you are willing to let an adult view: remember that your online content today will be accessible your employer, banks, insurance companies etc.

9. Be responsible in your response to a negative experience. Protect yourself from future negative experiences by changing your privacy settings or deleting your account.

Communication between pupils / schools staff

Communication between pupils and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

1) Salesian Secondary College has provided an e-mail address for communication between staff and pupils. Staff should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents.
2) Staff should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
3) Members of the school community need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of school, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites about others connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might bring the school into disrepute.
4) Teachers and other school employees must restrict electronic communications with students to accounts, systems and platforms provided by the school.
5) Teachers and other employees may not use personal wireless communications devices to "text" students and are prohibited from interacting with students through online social-networking sites.
6) Teachers and other school employees must decline or disregard invitations from students to interact through texting and social-networking sites.
7) Teachers and other school employees may not knowingly engage in online gaming with students.
8) School policy on electronic communications with students also applies to teachers and other employees of virtual school programs and other vendors providing instructional services to students.
9) Teachers who collect images from School events for use on school social media (Facebook, website etc) MUST ensure that a student's parents / guardian has agreed to the image's use. The image should be sent immediately through the school email to one of the PR Team and deleted from the device. Teachers should not store images of school events on their personal device.

Overall, communications should be transparent, accessible and professional in tone.

Guidelines for in-person communications with students:
● Conversations with students should focus on matters related to instruction and school activities.
● School employees and volunteers should not initiate discussions about their private lives or the intimate details of the private lives of unrelated students.
● Conversation by school employees and volunteers with students that could be interpreted as flirtatious, romantic or sexual is prohibited.
● The sharing of sexually explicit or obscene jokes and verbal "kidding" of a sexual nature between school employees, volunteers and students is prohibited.
● Private, one-to-one conversations with students should take place within the potential view, but out of the earshot of other adults — such as in a classroom with the hallway door open. This policy also applies to conversations between volunteers and unrelated students. Please refer to the school's Policy Governing One to One Encounters.

- School employees may not conduct an ongoing series of one-on-one meetings with a student without the knowledge of the principal and without written permission of a parent or guardian.
- The school policy on in-person communications with students also applies to teachers and other employees of virtual school programs and other vendors providing instructional services to students.

Guidelines for staff on the use of Social Media sites.
Personal use of Social Media Use of these sites by staff in school is governed by Salesian Secondary College's I.T Policy and the 'Code of Professional Conduct' from the Teaching Council. All telephone contact with parents should be made through the school landline phone or the school mobile phone.

Educational use by staff: Social Media sites can offer educational opportunities for collaboration on projects, presentation of ideas and sharing of class materials and resources. Staff should be guided by the following principles when incorporating Social Media into their teaching.

- The starting point for all Social Media interaction should be via a link in your Subject Department section on the school's website.
- The educational advantage of the use of the Social Media site in question should be clear and permission sought from the school Principal before use.
- Material that is confidential in nature such as student names, grades etc. should never be posted.
- 'Groups' should be used when collaborating on Facebook. Membership of these can be strictly controlled and users do not have to be friends of other users or the group's creator.
- Pay strict attention to intellectual property and copyright laws.
- All students participating in the online collaboration should be advised of their responsibility to use the site appropriately
- Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement and maintain the highest professional standards while using Social Media in the school.

Guidelines to the use of Email with students.
Email is an excellent way of communicating with students. All students and teachers are issued with school email addresses for this purpose. Only school mail addresses should be used.
School email, as with all content which goes through the school server, is the property of Salesian Secondary College.
Occasionally, teachers have reported that they have received messages from students to their school email addresses during school closure times. This is more common now that teachers have their phones set up to receive school email.
This leads to a potential concern for teachers who receive requests from students for assistance, advice or rescue at the weekends and at night time. Some guidelines:

- Teachers should not open any communication lines with students on any social media.
- Teachers should ensure that the school email address is the only address that students can access. The teacher should clearly outline contact boundaries, if students are allowed to use a teacher's email address for classroom purposes.
- Teachers should consider setting an "out of office" response on his / her school email address for after school hours, weekends and holiday time. Depending on the teacher's role in the school, a modified version of Appendix A might be appropriate.
- If a teacher does open a worrying email, he / she should refer this to the DLP or DDLP immediately.

Unacceptable uses of Social Media sites and their consequences.

Users are responsible for their own behaviour when communicating with social media and will be held accountable for the content of the communications that they post on social media locations. Unacceptable use of Social Media sites will include:

- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, negative comments, threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of the school community.
- Forwarding or 'Liking' material that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party.
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the school's image or reputation.
- Creating a fake profile that impersonates any another member of the school community.
- Sending or posting material that is confidential to the school.
- Uses that violates copyright law, fail to observe licensing agreements or infringe on others intellectual property rights.
- Participating in the viewing or exchange of inappropriate images or obscene material.

Evaluation

School Management will accept feedback from staff, students and parents made through the proper use of the appropriate channels i.e staff meetings, student committees and PSAC. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by management.

This policy is incorporated into the body of school policy from the date of ratification.

Signed: _____ Date: Ratified March 2018

Salesian Secondary College.

Appendix A.

Suggested out of office reply:

"Please note that this email is not monitored by this teacher outside of school hours. Issues can be brought to your teacher's attention during school time.

If there is a student emergency, please **consult your safe adult** or access the following services:"

Garda: 112 or 999
Childline:

By Phone	24hrs a day	**Call 1800 66 66 66**
One to One live chat	10am-4am every day	**Log on to www.childline.ie**
By text	10am-4am every day	**Text 'talk' to 50101**
By text	10am-4am every day	**Text 'Bully' to 50101**
By text	10am-4am every day	**Text 'Help' to 50101**
Website		**Log on to www.childline.ie**

Samaritans: 061 412111 (local call charges apply) / National telephone: 116 123 (this number is free to call)
Pieta House Midwest
Ardaulin, Mungret, Limerick, V94 T258
Phone: 061-484444
Contact Person: Clinical Manager - Nora ConwayOpening Hours:
Monday, Wednesday & Friday: 9am to 5pm
Tuesday and Thursday: 9am to 8pm
Saturday: 10am to 2pm

Social Media Information Definitions/Explanations

· Blogs are web journals where users can post text, videos, or audio content inviting others to comment on these entries.

· Micro blogs allow users to exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, individual images, or video links. These small messages are sometimes called microposts.

· Social Networks are websites where users can create profiles and form connections with other users.

· A wiki is a space on the Web where you can share work and ideas, pictures and links, videos and media. These are resources that can be edited collaboratively by a community of users

· Instant messaging (IM) is a form of communication over the internet that offers quick transmission of text-based messages from sender to receiver. Instant messaging basically offers real-time direct written language-based online chat.

· A virtual world is an online community that takes the form of a computer-based simulated environment through which users can interact with one another and use and create objects. The term has become largely synonymous with interactive 3D virtual environments, where the users take the form of avatars visible to others. These avatars usually appear as textual, two-dimensional, or three-dimensional representations, although other forms are possible (auditory and touch sensations for example). In general, virtual worlds allow for multiple users.

· Twitter is an online social networking service and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters known as "tweets".

· Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends.

· MySpace is a social networking service owned by Specific Media LLC and pop music singer and actor Justin Timberlake