



ANAHILT
Primary School

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

Anahilt Primary School acknowledges that recent developments in mobile and internet based technology have seen ever increasing numbers of adults and children making use of social media sites. Social media sites bring schools and the wider community a whole host of opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with the wider world in new and exciting ways. The nature of social networking and the mobile technology on which it is deployed allows all users to access it in a flexible and effective way. However, as with all developments in technology we as a school have to ensure that we are prepared for the associated risks/challenges of such technologies and take necessary steps to protect the image and reputation of Anahilt Primary School, staff, pupils and governors. The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect members of the school community from legal risks;
- ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff, pupils and governors are protected;
- safeguard all members of the school community;
- ensure that all members of the school community understand what is classed as 'acceptable' behaviour when using social media technology within a professional context.

Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include: blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, microblogging applications and online gaming environments. Examples include WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Windows Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumbler, Instagram, iPhoneagram etc. as well as public websites such as newspaper websites. All members of the School Community (Staff, Pupils, Governors and Parents) should be aware that the information they share through social networking applications, even if on private spaces, are still subject to copyrights, data protection and freedom of information legislation, child protection and safeguarding policies and other legislations. Please note that within this policy there is a distinction between the use of *school sanctioned* social media for professional purposes and personal use of social media.

Guidelines for Members of the School Community (To include Governors, Staff, Parents and Pupils)

Members of the School Community:

- 1 must be considerate when using social media and ensure that **all** communications regarding other members of the school community are **positive**.
- 2 are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible level on all personal social media accounts.

- 3 should note that all email communication between staff and members of the school community **on school business** must be made through an official school email account, **not** via social media.
- 4 **must not** post comments about any other member of the school community (current or past) that could be deemed as defamatory or offensive.
- 5 are advised to **avoid** commenting on negative posts or comments posted by others that refer to specific matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media account.

School Sanctioned Use of Social Media

There are many legitimate uses of social media to support the school e.g. PTA. When using social media for school purposes the following practice must be observed:

- 1 Any social media sites set up on behalf of the school should be entirely separate from any personal social media account held by members of staff.
- 2 The content of any school sanctioned social media sites must be solely professional and reflect well on the school.
- 3 Photographs of pupils will not be published on social media without prior written consent from the parent/carer.
- 4 Care must be taken that any links to external sites are appropriate and safe.
- 5 Any inappropriate comments on school sanctioned social media must be immediately removed and reported to the Principal.

Ref: Pastoral Care Policy

This Policy was accepted and endorsed by the Board of Governors of the school at a meeting held on 27 November 2018

Social Media Policy and 'Joint' Guidelines for Parents

I acknowledge receipt of these documents and agree to follow the guidelines within them.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian) Date: _____

Child(ren): _____ (Class(es): P _____)

Please complete and return to the school office.



Guidelines for Parents



Joint Guidance on Unhelpful Social Media Posting

We tend to forget that almost anybody can see what we are posting online and comments that may have been made in the heat of the moment can easily be copied and then shared by others, even after the original post has been deleted. As Lisburn schools, we wish to urge our school communities to work together, communicate appropriately and remember at all times that parents/carers are representatives of their schools. Inappropriate actions on social media can impact negatively on the life and welfare of those connected with the school.



The partnership of parents and school is central to achieving the best pastoral and educational outcomes for all our pupils.

- All Parents/Guardians have a responsibility in role-modelling effective, appropriate and safe communication on social media.
- Parents/Guardians should be aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking by accessing their own school's social media policy.



Methods of proper school communication with parents/carers include;

- School prospectus, school website, newsletters, texting service, emails, letters and face to face meetings.
- Pictures taken of pupils within the school setting/at school events should not be posted on social networking sites without other parents' permission. It is recommended that photographs of school members be confined to the school's website.
- Parents should be aware that primary aged children should not be on social media platforms. It is the parents' duty to protect their children from unhelpful social media contact. It is also not the school's responsibility to deal with any social media issues which have taken place outside of school.
- Parents should not share complaints about a child, teacher or school through social media as such action, *and subsequent comments by others*, may cause significant emotional distress to those persons named and the school community as a whole. Every school has a published Complaints' Procedure which should be adhered to by both parents and the school.



Please remember that perceived complaints written in the heat of the moment and posted on social media may have a personal bias and not necessarily reflect the whole truth about a situation or incident to viewers. We therefore advise parents not to be drawn into liking or commenting on such posts if they see them on social media.

Complaints to do with 'in school' incidents, should they arise, should be pursued through the appropriate channels by;

- Making contact with the class teacher, the Vice Principal or the Principal.
- A meeting can then be arranged at a mutually convenient time to try and bring about a resolution to the issue.
- All schools have a Complaints Procedure that should be followed.

Parents/ carers should also be aware that defamatory/unhelpful comments made online will naturally be viewed negatively by the school as the parent/carer has chosen to disregard the school's Complaints Policy. The parent will have to be asked to come in and speak to Senior Management about this breach in policy and the matter dealt with face to face, which would have been the preferred method of dealing with the initial complaint.



THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARENTS WHO PARTNER WITH US WITH FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING.

