



# **Social Media Policy**

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

Annalong Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school, its staff, parents/carers and pupils.

### **This policy:**

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation *are* within the scope of this policy.

- Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.
- Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on, the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
- Digital communications with learners are also considered. Staff may only use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

- **Principal**
  - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
  - Developing and implementing the Social Media Policy.
  - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
  - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
  - Approve content creation.
- **ICT Co-ordinator**
  - Create the account following principal approval.
  - Store account details, including passwords securely.
  - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account.
  - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring).
  - Approve content creation.

- **Staff**

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies.
- Attending appropriate training.
- Create content and send to Principal/ICT Co-ordinator for approval.
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school.

## **Monitoring**

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

## **Behaviour**

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school Social Media Policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to the principal, and escalated where appropriate.
- The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites while at work. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the Social Media Policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

## **Legal considerations**

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

## **Handling abuse**

- When acting on behalf of the school, respond to harmful and / or offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.

- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of online communications, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

## **Tone**

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing online content are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Professional

## **Use of images**

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pupil pictures online other than via official school channels.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Learners should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

## **Personal use**

### **• Staff**

- Personal communications are those made via a personal online accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
- Where excessive or inappropriate personal use of social media while at work is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- Staff are strongly discouraged from following or engaging with current or prior learners of the school on any personal social media account until the pupil is, at the very least, 18 years old.

### **• Pupils**

- The school's education programme should enable the learners to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's Behaviour Policy

- **Parents/Carers**

- Parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
- In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, the parent will be advised of the school's complaints procedures.

## Appendix 1: **Facebook Top Tips for Staff**

### **10 suggestions for school staff 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 about 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 during school hours.
7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, our school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there.
8. Don't associate yourself with the 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 number) is able to find you using this information.
10. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone. The app recognises wifi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same wifi 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](https://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
- Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people can't search for you by name – go to [bit.ly/2zMdVht](https://bit.ly/2zMdVht) 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.

### **What do to 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, tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils.
- Don't accept friend requests from pupils on social media

A parent adds you on social media

- You should decline the offer or ignore the message.

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 pupil or staff member, our 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 any reasonable concerns or 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 the principal should consider contacting the police.

## Appendix 2: Acceptable Use of the Internet: Agreement for Parents and Carers

<b>Name of Parent:</b>
Online channels are an important way for parents/carers to communicate with, or about, our school. The school uses the following channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• APS App</li><li>• Email</li><li>• School Website</li><li>• Twitter</li><li>• Facebook</li></ul>
When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, <b>I will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be respectful towards members of staff, and the school, at all times</li><li>• Be respectful of other parents/carers and children</li><li>• Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure</li></ul> <b>I will not:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use private groups or personal social media to complain about or criticise members of staff. This is not constructive and the school can't improve or address issues if they aren't raised in an appropriate way</li><li>• Use private groups or personal social media to complain about, or try to resolve, a behaviour issue involving other pupils. I will contact the school and speak to the appropriate member of staff if I'm aware of a specific behaviour issue or incident</li><li>• Upload or share photos or videos on social media of any child other than my own</li></ul>
Signed:
Date:



