

Claddaghduff N.S Social Media Policy

Introduction and Aims of the Policy

Social media is defined as any form of online publication that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, School websites (including blogs). This policy is intended to provide guidance and direction on issues relating to the use of social media as outlined above, including the use of such services via mobile devices and smartphones.

This policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in Claddaghduff N.S. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents and others who form part of the Claddaghduff National School community. 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 digital devices.

The aim of the Social Media policy is to offer guidance and direction to all members of the Claddaghduff N.S community on the safe and responsible use of social media. It aims to produce a set of strategies for pupils that will allow them to use social media safely and responsibly. Unfortunately, there is scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of social media sites, which can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity while online. The policy therefore also aims to protect the integrity and good name of our school and of all members of the school community from online abuse.

Claddaghduff National School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases, Claddaghduff National School will, where known, inform parents/guardians of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

Strategies for Promoting Safe Use of the Internet

Claddaghduff National School implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Staff will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Claddaghduff National School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer and more effective use of the internet.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Bí Cineálta Policy

- Code of Good Behaviour
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers- Section 3
Guidance for Registered Teachers About the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication

It is envisaged that the school community will review the Social Media Policy regularly. Before enrolling in the school, the Social Media Policy should be read carefully by Parents/ Guardians to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent/guardian accepts the terms of the Social Media Policy unless the school is specifically notified.

Acceptable Use and Guidelines for the use of Social Media

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

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 media about others connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs or videos which might bring the school into disrepute.

When using the internet, pupils, parents/guardians and staff are expected to:

- Treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.
- Adhere to all regulations under the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
 - Copyrighted material should not be re-copied, republished, posted on a web page or multi-copied.
 - Recorded performances of copyrighted literary, dramatic or musical work should not be published or posted on social media/web pages.

Pupils

- If using social media, pupils should be respectful in all their interactions with their classmates.
- Pupils must never use their Claddaghduff N.S email account or password in conjunction with personal social media.
- Pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Pupils should not identify the school or any members of the school community if publishing comments or material online.
- Pupils should not circulate images or videos of any members of the school

community without permission.

- Pupils should not attempt to contact staff members via social media platforms.
- Pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, and other members of the Claddaghduff National School community.
- Pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Claddaghduff National School community on social media.
- Pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Claddaghduff National School into disrepute.
- Pupils must not represent their personal views as those of being Claddaghduff National School on any social media platform.

Parents/Guardians

- Parents should be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions that apply to primary aged children. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Parents should monitor their children's online social media activity, and read the terms and conditions of the various Social Media platforms and applications their children are using.
- Parents should not attempt to contact staff members via social media platforms.
- Parents should not identify the school or any members of the school community when publishing comments or material online.
- Parents should promptly report to the school Principal any negative online activity relating to the school or to any members of the school community.
- Parents should not circulate images or videos of any members of the school community without permission.

Staff members

- Staff members should ensure that their personal social media accounts remain personal in nature and are used to share personal opinions or non-work-related information. Following this principle helps to ensure a distinction between sharing personal views and those of Claddaghduff N.S.
- Staff members should not identify the school or any members of the school community when publishing comments or material on social media.
- Staff members must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, and other members of the Claddaghduff National School community.
- Staff members must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Claddaghduff National School community on social media.
- Staff members must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Claddaghduff National School into disrepute.
- Staff members must not represent their personal views as those of being Claddaghduff National School on any social media platform.
- Staff members must never use their Claddaghduff N.S email account or password in conjunction with personal social media.
- Staff members should not use their personal profiles to conduct school business or

communicate with pupils or parents/guardians on school matters. Communication should be made through the agreed school channels only: school email or school telephone.

- Staff members should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal email addresses to pupils or parents/guardians, unless they know them on a personal level.
- If a staff member receives a request to connect with a parent/guardian on social media, they are strongly advised to respond not to accept, unless they know them on a personal level.
- Staff members should not interact with any pupil in the school on social media
- Staff members should not interact on social media with any ex-pupil under the age of 18.

Social Media as part of School Service

We acknowledge that there are many social media platforms which can be of great use to the children's educational and social development and online sites such as GoNoodle etc are currently in use in our school.

All proposals for using social media and social networking sites as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must first be approved by the Principal.

Responsibility and accountability

The Principal and Board of Management

- Should ensure that all existing and new staff are trained and become familiar with this policy and its relationship to the school's standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT and e-safety;
- Should provide regular opportunities to discuss appropriate social media use by staff and ensure that any queries raised are resolved swiftly;
- Must ensure that any allegations raised in respect of access to social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Bí Cineálta Policy and Code of Behaviour.

School staff

- Should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and its relationship to the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Bí Cineálta Policy, and Code of Behaviour; as well as the Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools and the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- Should raise any queries or areas of concern they have relating to the use of social media and interpretation of this policy with the Principal in the first instance; and

- Must comply with this policy where specific activities or conduct is prohibited.
 - This document prepared by the Teaching Council can be accessed at: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/publications/fitness-to-teach/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication>

Child Protection Guidance

If any member of staff receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using social media in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person (The Principal)
- The disclosure should be recorded by the Designated Liaison Person in line with the Child Protection Policy, and Tusla should be contacted for guidance.
- Procedure as advised by Tusla will be followed, and the necessary authorities contacted.

Cyber Bullying

By adopting this policy on the use of social media sites on school premises, Claddaghduff National School protects itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

- Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.
- Where a disclosure of cyber bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.
- Once a disclosure is made, an investigation will have to involve all parties involved and their families. This should be dealt with in accordance with our school's Bí Cineálta policy.
- If parents refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to An Garda Síochána.
- While incidents occurring outside of school are not the responsibility of the Board of Management, we will endeavour to assist in brokering a solution between parties involved. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

Breach of Policy

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal should be informed. Breach of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including but not limited to the following:

- Suspension of network and computer privileges.
- Confiscation of devices if found on school grounds or at school related activities.
- Notification to parents.
- Detention

- Disciplinary sanction (in the case of teachers)
- Legal action and/or prosecution.

Implementation and Review

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, and Board of Management members.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed every 3 years by the Board of Management, staff and relevant stakeholders.

Feicin Mulkerrin

Feicin Mulkerrin,
Chairperson

Date