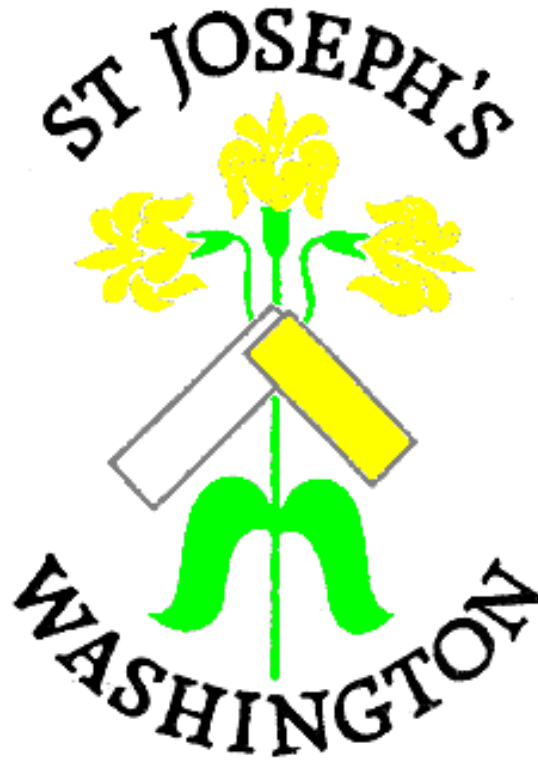


## Social Media Policy



We are children of God: we achieve, believe and care.

Ratified on: 24/01/2019

Chair: M Jakeway

Headteacher: J Black

To be Reviewed: 2 Years

## **St Joseph's is a happy and caring Catholic school where everyone aspires to reach their true potential with Christ at the heart of all we do.**

### **We are committed to:**

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media in support of the St Joseph's RC Primary School mission, values and objectives
- Protecting our students from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour. Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

### **Definitions for this policy**

St Joseph's RC Primary School defines "social media" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including but not limited to:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services such as Tapestry
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter
- Snapchat
- Kik Messenger
- Mobile TV applications such as Sky Sports

We advise parents that many social media sites do impose an age restriction set to protect the child. Therefore, no primary age children should be using or accessing these types of social media sites in a primary school.

St Joseph's RC Primary School defines "cyber bullying" as any use of social media or communication technology to bully an individual or group.

St Joseph's RC Primary School defines "members of the school community" as any teacher, member of support staff, student, parent/carer of student, governor or ex-student.

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example: from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.

Whilst recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that St Joseph's RC Primary School staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media.

This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example Facebook), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites and content sharing sites such as, Instagram and YouTube. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

The policy is based around 6 key areas

1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.
3. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.
4. Comments posted by parents/carers.
5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.
6. St Joseph's social media accounts.

### **1. The use of social media sites by pupils whilst at school**

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) makes it clear to pupils what use of social media is allowed. This states that, 'Social network sites should never be accessed/used within school'.

### **2. Use of social media sites by employees in a personal capacity**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be advised as follows:

That they familiarise themselves with social network sites' privacy settings in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended. It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set to 'friends only irrespective of use/purpose.

That they do not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may;

- Bring the school into disrepute;
- Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees;
- Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors;
- Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children
- Contravene current National Teacher Standards

At the present time the head teacher strongly discourages any member of staff to form online friendships or enter into communication with parents/carers as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised.

- That they do not form online friendships or enter into online communication with pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised, and/or safeguarding allegations being raised
- That they should not post pictures or negative comments about school events

- They should not post negative comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including Governors
- They should never disclose sensitive, private or confidential information across private messaging
- That they consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion, which could result in their professional reputation being compromised.
- That they consider what they 'like, 'share' or 'follow' on social media sites e.g. politics and religion, which could result in their professional reputation being compromised.
- That they consider the pictures/videos they upload or post on a social media site and how this may portray them in their professional role working with children
- That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

Inappropriate use by employees should be referred to the Head teacher in the first instance.

### **3. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education**

All social media services must be approved by the Head teacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

### **4. Posts by parents/carers on social media sites**

- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media via this policy (in particular when their child joins the school), the school website, letter and school newsletters.
- Parents/carers are asked not to post images (photos and videos) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured
- Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media
- Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community
- Parents should not form online friendships or enter into online communication with employees, as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised
- Parent/Carers are reminded that school has obtained permission to post photographs on social media.

### **Procedure the School will follow if inappropriate use continues**

The school will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the School considers inappropriate, the School will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the school's concerns to you in writing, giving the parent/carer a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;

- Contact the police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.

## 5. Dealing with incidents of online (cyber) bullying

The schools Online Safety and/or Anti Bullying Policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear

Page 5 of DfE's 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' indicates that the school can take action against incidents that happen outside of school if it:

1. Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
2. Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
3. Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate would be covered by this irrespective of when/where the post was made.

## Be SMART Online

At St Joseph's RC Primary School we encourage students to take a SMART approach to social media behaviour:

- **Safe** – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online. Follow age restriction rules.
- **Meeting** – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents / carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.
- **Accepting** – We advise that students only accept emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.
- **Reliable** – We teach students about the dangers of believing everything they see online.
- **Tell** – We encourage students to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

## 6. St Josephs' RC Primary social media accounts

### Aims:

The purpose of having a school Facebook/Twitter account

- To continue to advance our school communication system with information shared via Facebook/Twitter account along with the existing methods of newsletters, text messages, email, and the school website.
- To publicise school events, and increase awareness about school fundraising.
- To announce any updated information that appears on our website via Facebook/Twitter account.

- To highlight positive school achievements in a forum where they can be shared by the school community.
- To make school announcements (e.g. school closure due to snow)
- To use Facebook/Twitter account as a means of marketing the school to a wider audience.
- To engage the community that St Joseph's RC Primary School serves and act as a key component of our school's online presence

### **Terms of Use of St Joseph's RC Primary School**

- School will only post photographs of pupils with parents' permission.
- School will not publish children's names alongside photographs on Facebook or Twitter.
- Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed as offensive – inappropriate or harmful comments/content will be removed immediately.
- Users should not engage in giving negative feedback on our accounts, it is more appropriate to deal with the school directly on such matters.
- Users will not mention individual staff members in a negative light on our school accounts.
- School will only post about off-site events once the event is finished.

### **Points to Note**

There will be an immediate ban should any user break any of the above terms and conditions.

We advise parents that many social media sites do impose an age restriction set to protect the child. Therefore, no primary age children should be using or accessing these types of social media sites in a primary school.