

# STRANDTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Strandtown  
Primary School

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**



DUE TO THE EVER CHANGING NATURE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IT IS BEST PRACTICE THAT THIS POLICY BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY AND, IF NECESSARY, MORE FREQUENTLY IN RESPONSE TO ANY SIGNIFICANT NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES, NEW THREATS TO E-SAFETY OR INCIDENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE

Updated	Review Date
September 2022	September 2023

# **Strandtown Primary School Social Media Policy**



## **Introduction to the Policy**

Strandtown Primary School has always embraced and developed the use of new technologies into the curriculum. The school acknowledges that recent developments in mobile and Internet based technology has seen an ever-increasing number of adults and children making use of social media sites. The most common of these are WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and TikTok. Social networking sites can bring schools and their wider communities 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 allow all users to access it in a flexible and effective way. As a school we have to plan and ensure that we balance the use of social networking and the associated risks and take necessary steps to protect the image and reputation of the staff, school community and organisation.

## **Purpose of this Document**

The aim of this policy is to support and develop all members of the school communities understanding of the risks involved and develop a structure of good practice that supports innovation and provides a framework of good support, whilst protecting the school's reputation and that of the staff and community.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document.

This document applies to all staff that work in Strandtown Primary School and parents/guardians of children who attend the school. This includes teachers, support staff, supply staff, governors and volunteers. It should be followed by an adult whose work brings them into contact with pupils. Reference to staff should be taken to apply to all the above groups of people in schools. Reference to pupils means all pupils at the school.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that:

- The school and the staff are not exposed to legal risks.
- The reputation of the school, staff members and governors are not adversely affected.
- That all members of the school community understand how the school uses social media technology to support communication and learning in school.
- That all members of the school community understand what is classed as acceptable behaviour when using social media technology within a professional context.
- That all members of the school community are clearly able to distinguish where information provided via a social networking application is legitimately representative of the organisation.

## **What is Social Media?**

For the purpose of this policy, social media is the term commonly used for websites that allow people to interact with each other in some way- by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter are perhaps the most well-known examples of social media but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, video and audio podcasts, wikis, message boards, and photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube. This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day.

For the purpose of this document the terminology Social Media is not exhaustive and also applies to the use of communication technologies such as mobile phones, cameras, tablets or other handheld devices and any other emerging forms of communications technologies.

## **The Role of School Leaders, Governors and Staff**

All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils, public in general and all those with whom they work in line with the school's code of conduct. 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. Strandtown Primary School, the staff and the Board of Governors have the right to protect and uphold the reputation of the school and staff members. In order to do this the governors and senior leadership team have devised a code of conduct & staff user agreement ([see staff/volunteer user agreement document](#)) that is to be followed at all times whilst on school premises.

To protect employees', own professional reputation and that of the school, Strandtown Primary School and the governing body reminds all members of staff that all communication via social networking sites must be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore advised that staff follow the following procedures:



Staff must not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment.

- Staff must not accept past or current pupils or parents as friends – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff vulnerable to allegations.
- Staff must not provide parents or students with personal contact details, email or mobile numbers.
- Staff must not use personal devices to record images of children or colleagues, any images taken on school owned devices must not be taken off site without the prior consent of the Vice Principal or Principal. On the rare occasion that Staff are outside of school on a

residential trip or sporting activity, they are permitted to take images, with the understanding that they are uploaded to the school system and deleted before the end of the day.

- Staff must always check resources on Youtube, Flickr and similar sites prior to using them to ensure that nothing offensive or inappropriate is visible.
- Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- Staff must not disclose any information about the school that is not yet in the public arena.
- All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.
- Staff must take reasonable action to secure private sites, profiles and accounts. If required, the ICT Coordinators are able to demonstrate to any staff member how to change the setting to ensure that their account cannot be viewed by uninvited users. Passwords must not be shared with any students.
- Staff are advised not to place inappropriate photographs publicly on their social networking account.
- Staff are advised not to post indecent remarks, or remarks that could be deemed as defamatory or offensive.
- If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil, they must report it to the Vice Principal or Principal and contact their internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action.
- Staff are advised not to put any information onto any social networking sites that could identify either their profession or the school where they work. All other guidelines in this policy must be adhered to when making any reference to the workplace.
- Staff must not make defamatory remarks about the school, colleagues or pupils, or post anything that could potentially bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff must not disclose confidential information relating to his/her employment at the school.
- No reference should be made in social media to pupils, parents / carers or school staff.
- Staff do not engage in online discussion on personal matters relating to members of the school community.
- Personal opinions should not be attributed to Strandtown Primary School or local authority.
- Security settings on personal social media profiles are regularly checked to minimise risk of loss of personal information.
- When writing emails and other communications care must be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive to others, emails sent from the school domain must be

written in a professional manner. Outside of school we recognise that all members of the school community have the right to a private life, but we ask that all employees follow these guidelines to help protect the professional reputation of themselves and the school.

- Staff must be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile numbers. This will avoid the potential for pupils or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.

### **The Role of Parents, Guardians, Carers & Relatives**

Whilst on the school premises we ask that all parents and guardians follow these rules to ensure that our school environment is protected and safe.

- Mobile phones must not be used whilst inside the building. Photographs are not permitted.
- Whilst collecting and dropping off children we ask that parents do not use their mobile devices to take pictures within the school building and playground areas.
- Whilst we are happy for parents to take images of our school events, trips and performances using digital cameras we ask that you do not post them publicly on social media sites or image hosting sites such as Facebook or Instagram. If images are found or reported to the school, we will contact the account holder or the service provider and ask for them to be removed.
- We ask that parents and guardians follow our grievance procedures and contact the school office or Principal directly if they have a concern or complaint about a member of staff or an incident that occurred during the school day. Please do not post details of a complaint or grievance publicly on a social media site e.g. Facebook or WhatsApp. Such action could be prejudicial in respect of the formal grievance/complaints procedure.
- Please remember that the school and Board of Governors have a legal right to protect the reputation of the school and will use all necessary means to remove any defamatory comments, sites or posts from the internet.
- We ask that parents do not post general material relating to members of the school community or confidential material including details from meetings, reviews and parent teacher conferences online, for example, posting commentaries on AQE results. Outside of school we ask that parents and guardians support the work of the school by ensuring that their children's internet access is supervised and safe. Parents and guardians have a duty of care and must ensure that websites are filtered using appropriate software. Please ensure that your children are using age appropriate sites, software and games: YouTube, Google, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Instagram legally requires that all users are 13 or older before they can create a profile. If the school becomes aware of any inappropriate use of social media sites, firstly we will engage with the parents and in certain situations the school will request that the service provider removes the account.

### **The Roles of the Children**

Whilst on the school premises we ask that all our children follow these rules to ensure that our school environment is protected and safe.

- Mobile devices and electronic devices with wi-fi must be switched off at the main entrance and not used whilst inside the building. Children must keep their mobile device in their schoolbag during the duration of the school day. Please note the school accepts no liability for damage or loss to mobile devices brought onto school premises.
- Whilst we are happy for children to take images of our school events, trips and performances using digital cameras we ask that you do not post them publicly on social media sites or image hosting sites such as Facebook or Instagram. If images are reported to the school, we will contact the account holder or the service provider and ask for them to remove them.
- Please remember that the school and Board of Governors have a legal right to protect the reputation of the school and will use all necessary means to remove any defamatory - comments, sites or posts from the internet.
- We ask that the children do not post confidential material including details from meetings, reviews and parent teacher conferences online.
- We ask that children will support the schools approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could be directly related to other children or other members of the school community. The school makes all children aware that their use of ICT resource both inside and outside of the school can be checked and that their parent/guardian can be contacted if a member of school staff is concerned about their eSafety or their use of IT resources. **(See Acceptable Use Policy for Further Details)**

## **Sexual Exploitation**

It is necessary parents are aware of the dangers of child sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

## **Bullying Online**

Bullying Online can be defined as 'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.'

- The use of the internet, text messages, e-mail, video or audio to bully another pupil or member of staff will not be tolerated by Strandtown Primary School.
- It is necessary to remember that while the harmful online speech or interactions can occur out of school, personal interactions between the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) are occurring at school.

The following four key areas form a comprehensive and effective prevention plan:

- School will foster a culture of understanding and talking about bullying online. Everyone in school needs to be aware of the impact of bullying online and the ways in which it differs from other forms of bullying. The school will provide parents and pupils with support should the bullying online take place out of school.
- School will keep policies and practices updated, this includes keeping good records of any incidents via our E-safety report form.
- School will make reporting bullying online easy, by keeping pupils informed of who they can talk to. Children should be confident when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology: they must be able to do this without fear.

- School will promote the positive use of technology by discussing relevant e-safety and digital information.

If a bullying incident directed at a pupil occurs using e-mail or mobile phone technology either inside or outside of school time the following steps should be taken:

- Advise the child not to respond to the message
- Secure and preserve evidence (message/photo etc.)
- Complete E-safety report form and discuss with E-safety Officer.
- Notify parents of the children involved.
- Consider what further steps are necessary depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the incident.

If bullying online does take place, staff should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. Staff are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site on E-safety report form.

Staff are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying online to their line manager, E-safety Officer or the Principal. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

Where incidents occur outside of school it is at the Principals' discretion to discipline pupils. We ask that in the first instance pupils report the incident to their class teacher or parents. It is important that children do not cause a situation to escalate by posting defamatory comments, emails or challenging other parents or children within the school grounds.

#### **Link with other policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents for schools:

Anti-Bullying Policy

Use of Internet & Digital Technologies Policy Incorporating E-Safety

Password Policy

ICT Policy