

St. Joseph's Grammar School

Scoil Iósaef



Social Media Acceptable Use Policy- Staff

Policy Author	Ms D Dolan Head of ICT/ UICT Co-ordinator
Frequency of Review	Bi-Annual
Date of Last Review	Apr 2025
Date Approved by Governors	
Proposed by	
Seconded by	
Date of Next Review	Apr 2027

Preamble

*This policy applies to all School staff regardless of their employment status. It is to be read in conjunction with the full e-safety policy. This policy does not form part of the terms and conditions of employee's employment with the School and is not intended to have contractual effect. It does however set out the School's current practices and required standards of conduct and all staff are required to comply with its contents. Breach of the provisions of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence which may result in disciplinary action **up to and including summary dismissal in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.***

This Policy may be amended from time to time and staff will be notified of any changes no later than one month from the date those changes are intended to take effect.

Rationale

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Safeguard all children
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Child Protection, Internet and e-Safety Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between the use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

Use of Social Media in practice

1. Personal use of social media

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at St. Joseph's Grammar School.
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites (i.e. Direct/ Private messaging or Friend Requests) must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection (**VP-Pastoral Manager: Mrs A McGleenan**)
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from the official school email account (C2K network)
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to contact members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Principal.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts. School business should not be discussed in social media platforms with colleagues or people external to the organisation.
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account

2. School-sanctioned use of social media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, the school has official Twitter (@SJS41), Facebook and Instagram accounts, and several A Level courses require the use of blogs for assessment. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff can only set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes with the permission of the Principal. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff and should be linked to an official school email account.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate Head of Department or member of the SLT before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts, in line with the school **Use of Images Policy**
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.

- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public. If a student attempts to communicate with you in private via a school social media account, please report this to the designated person for Child Protection (**VP-Pastoral Manager: Mrs A McGleenan**).
- ***All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link/reference to both the Staff and Student Acceptable Use Policies under 'About Us' that can be accessed on the school website or via the School App. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by St. Joseph's Grammar School.***

Monitoring of Policy

The contents of our IT resources and communications systems are the School's property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post, conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.

The School reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your acknowledgement of this policy and your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, logins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as other network monitoring technologies.

The School may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

All Staff are advised not to use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that he or she wishes to be kept private or confidential from the School.

Recruitment

The School may use internet searches to perform pre-employment checks on candidates during recruitment. **Where the School does this, it will act in accordance with its data protection and equal opportunities obligations.**

Protecting our business reputation:

Staff must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

- ✓ The School.
- ✓ current, past or prospective Staff as defined in this policy
- ✓ current, past or prospective pupils
- ✓ parents, carers or families of current, past or prospective pupils
- ✓ the School's suppliers and services providers; and
- ✓ Other affiliates and stakeholders.

Staff should also avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage the School's reputation, even indirectly.

If Staff are using social media, they should make it clear in any social media postings that they are speaking on their own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal rather than School e-mail address when communicating via social media.

Staff are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media. Staff should remember that what they publish might be available to be read by the masses (including the School itself, future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time. Staff should keep this in mind before they post content.

If Staff disclose whether directly or indirectly their affiliation to the School as a member of Staff whether past, current or prospective, they must also state that their views do not represent those of the School.

Staff must ensure that their profile and any content posted are consistent with the professional image they are required to present to colleagues, pupils and parents.

Staff must avoid posting comments about confidential or sensitive School related topics. Even if Staff make it clear that their views on such topics do not represent those of the School, such comments could still damage the School's reputation and incur potential liability.

If a member of Staff is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, he or she should refrain from making the communication until he or she has discussed the matter with their Line Manager or Head of Department.

If a member of Staff sees content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the School, it's Staff, pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders, he or she is required to report this in the first instance to the Principal without unreasonable delay.

All staff are responsible for protecting the School's reputation.

Respecting intellectual property and confidential information:

Staff should not do anything to jeopardise School confidential information and intellectual property using social media.

In addition, Staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other Schools, organisations, companies and individuals, which can create liability for the School, as well as the individual author.

Staff must not use the School's logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without express prior written permission from the Principal.

To protect yourself and the School against liability for copyright infringement, where appropriate, reference sources of information you post or upload and cite them accurately. If you have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, ask the Principal in the first instance before making the communication.

Respecting colleagues, pupils, parents, clients, service providers and stakeholders

Staff must not post anything that their colleagues, the School's past, current or prospective pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders may find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity.

Staff must not post anything related to colleagues, the School's past, current or prospective pupils, parents, service providers or stakeholders without their advanced written permission.

Monitoring and review of this policy

The ICT Co-ordinator/ Principal shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice. The Board of Governors has responsibility for approving any amendments prior to implementation.

The Principal has responsibility for ensuring that any person who may be involved with administration or investigations carried out under this policy receives regular and appropriate training to assist them with these duties.

If Staff have any questions about this policy or suggestions for additions that they would like to be considered on review, they may do so by contacting the ICT Co-ordinator.

Appendix- Staff School Social Media Audit April 2023

Social Media Account	No. of Users with Editor Access
SJS Facebook	4
SJS Twitter	5
SJS Instagram	4
School App	9 (inc Office staff)