Christ the King Catholic Primary School

& St. Mary's Catholic College

Social Media Policy

Version: 1

Adopted: February 2014

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1. Introduction

Principles – Be professional, responsible and respectful.

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/college, 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.

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with Christ the King Catholic Primary School and St Mary's Catholic College Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

2. 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 Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, 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 / college's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT.

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

3. Personal use of social media

Staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community (unless they are family members) in any personal social media whilst in employment at Christ the King Catholic Primary School / St. Mary's Catholic College.

Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Safeguarding or Headteacher. 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 /college community on school /college business must be made from an official school / college email account.

- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school/ college community on school / college business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.

- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school / college and members of its community on any social media accounts.

- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school / college in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.

- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school / college under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

4. Specific guidance for Facebook

Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a "no under 13 registration policy" and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

"If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us"

"We strongly recommend that minors, 13 years of age or older, ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk about safe internet use can be found on this help page

5.   School-sanctioned use of social media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, 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 should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school / college email account.

- The URL and identity of the site should be agreed with the appropriate class/ year group Head, Head of Faculty or member of the SLT before access is permitted for students.

- The content of any school / college -sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school / college.

- 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 / college social media accounts.

- 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 /college -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

- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the school website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by the school / college.