



Phoenix Integrated Primary & Nursery School

Social Media Policy

(Part of ICT and Safeguarding policy provision)

Policy developed: Term 1 2017/18

Date Ratified: 2018/2029- no changes made

Reviewed 2019/2020- no changes made

Reviewed 11.11.20 – no changes made

Reviewed 15.10.22 – review two yearly and as per guidance received

Reviewed 15.09.23- review and no changes made

Signed: 

Policy Review: Yearly

Introduction

Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery acknowledge that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social media sites. Social media plays an important role in the lives of many people. These sites are powerful tools and are fast becoming an integral part of our lives. The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or be aware of all the latest forms of emerging media and platforms. This policy covers the use of existing and any future social networking platforms.

We recognise that there are many benefits to be reaped from the use of social media but understand that its use also brings risks to both children and adults alike.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage responsible, positive and constructive use of social media.
- Prevent and avoid potential damage to the reputation of Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery and its employees, caused by irresponsible or unauthorised use of social media.
- Protect all school stakeholders, and remind them of their personal responsibilities both in and out of school when using social media.

The aim of this policy is to provide a balance between supporting the use of social media, whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests in a virtual community. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are well-known examples but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, online discussion forums and message boards, video and audio podcasts, wikis, 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.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social media applications by all school stakeholders, including teachers, support staff, governors, pupils, parents, supply staff, work experience and teaching practice students and volunteers.

Access to Social Media on School Premises

- School equipment must not, at any time, be used for personal access to social media.
- School equipment may only be used to access and post to social media on behalf of the school, by official users, or as part of any approved curriculum activities.
- Employees may use any personal devices they own to access social media during any breaks, provided this is done responsibly, in accordance with this policy, and all other relevant policies of the school and away from the presence of pupils

Approved use of Social Media on behalf of the school

- All use of social media on behalf of the school (official use) must comply fully, and be approved in accordance with this policy and all other relevant policies of the school. It must also comply with all relevant laws.
- Only official users *approved by the Principal or Vice-Principal may use social media on behalf of the school, or post any image, photograph, or information of any nature relating to the school, it's pupils, officers or employees*

The use of Social Media by pupils

We wish to highlight that most social media platforms have age limits which are set out clearly in their terms and conditions. Children must be at least 13 years old to use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. As safeguarding children is of fundamental importance to us all in Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery and we become aware that any of our pupils have registered and are users of such sites, parents will be informed and further action may taken as necessary.

In addition, pupils will be made aware that:

- They should follow the advice given in internet safety lessons throughout school.
- They should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with school employees, in any way, on social media applications. If pupils attempt to do this, the employee will inform the Head teacher and parents will be informed.
- School computers are not to be used to access social media sites at any time of day.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- Our school has a zero tolerance to cyber bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to report any improper contact or cyber bullying to their parents, or a member of school staff as soon as it happens.

The use of Social Media by parents and carers

Parents and carers have a right to use social media and Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery respect that. **However, the school also has a right to promote positive interactions online, protect its reputation adhere to the duty of care of our pupils and employees.** In that regard, we wish to make parents and carers aware of our expectations regarding their use of social media:

- Parents must not publish names of any pupils attending school and be cautious about posting names of past pupils and any young people they know.
- Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social media sites when these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Parents must not post any information about Phoenix Integrated Primary School and

Nursery on their personal social media accounts. Such information may be posted to the school page as a visitor post or passed to the official users of the school's social media sites, for posting on the school's official accounts, if desired.

- The school cannot engage in official advertising for any third party unless it is an agreed charity or community event.
- Parents should address any concerns or complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social media sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.
- Parents should report any damaging or negative comment/s about the school or its personnel on social media to the principal.

Effective communication, following principles of mutual respect, is the best means of ensuring high quality experiences for all in Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery. In the case of inappropriate use of social media by parents, the school will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and reserve the right to seek redress through the appropriate channels.

Please see appendix 1 for the school's 'Dos and Don'ts of Facebook Use'

Personal use of Social Media by staff

All employees of Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery (teachers, support staff and governors) have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect. It is important for everyone to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

We also encourage our staff to ensure that their personal reputation is not compromised by inappropriate postings.

Our code of conduct for the personal use of social media by staff is as follows:

- Staff should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with pupils, in any way, on social media applications (including past pupils under the age of 18).

- Staff must immediately inform the principal if pupils attempt to “follow”, “friend” or engage with them, in any way, on social media applications.
- Staff should never use or access social media sites of pupils (including past pupils under the age of 18).
- Staff should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with parents, in any way, on social media applications unless they are friends outside of school.
- Staff should report any damaging or negative comment about the school on social media to the principal or vice principal.
- Staff must not post derogatory or inappropriate comments about pupils, parents, colleagues or anyone else at / or connected with the school. Staff should not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.
- Staff should ensure that your online activity, **both in school and outside school**, will not bring your organisation or professional role into disrepute.
- Staff should not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- Staff must not post information or opinions about Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery or pictures/videos of school events. Such information may be passed to the official users of the school’s social media sites, for posting on the school’s official accounts, if desired.
- Staff must not use social media within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff may have legitimate reasons to use social network accounts to support learning in the classroom, or, for example, to communicate with sports teams. All social media uses must be approved by the Principal in advance.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff are encouraged to review their postings on social media sites to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate.
- Staff must not use social media in a way that would put them in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social media sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. There may be some instances where it is deemed appropriate to share mobile telephone numbers with some parents for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and

with the knowledge of School Leadership Team.

Please note that the term “staff” includes teachers, support staff, governors, supply staff, work experience and teaching practice students and volunteers.

Any breaches of this code will be fully investigated. Phoenix Integrated Primary School and Nursery will take appropriate action in order to protect the school’s reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

If online bullying occurs

- Do not respond to bullying incidents, report them appropriately and seek support from an appropriate staff member
- Staff are strongly advised to record as much information about abusive and inappropriate content before seeking its removal. This includes taking screenshots and recording URLs

E-Safety Parameters (National Curriculum of Study)

Key stage 1

Use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private; identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies.

Key stage 2

Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly; recognise acceptable/unacceptable behaviour; identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact.

Engaging with E-Safety

E-Safety is ongoing throughout the school year. Parents, staff and pupils are encouraged to engage in workshops to mark specific events, such as ‘Internet Safety Week.’

Review of policy

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies, this policy will 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.

Appendix 1



Social Media Tips for Parent/Guardians

Social media is a popular way for schools to share the work or the school with parents and build a profile within the local and wider community. To help us all we have put together some basic guidance to protect our pupils, parents and staff on social media. We use Facebook as a blog type account to share work and events within the school. The TWITTER account is used to promote the school at a wider educational level – within NI, UK and the rest of the world.

- To find us on Facebook, search for Phoenix Integrated Primary School and click “LIKE” to follow us.
- To find us on TWITTER – search for @phoenixips and click follow.



DOs

- Encourage other parents to LIKE and SHARE our FB page.
- To share a post or event – click SHARE.
- There are two ways that staff in school share posts. Many of our posts are timetabled remotely or will be shared on a daily basis.
- If you have a link to an interesting article, news or event then please post it to the page. Admin can then share it to the main page.
- The message facility is not used on the school page. If you have any problems or concerns, we ask you to contact the school directly. We would rather deal with any issues face to face or over the telephone.
- All posts will be closely monitored by the Facebook site administrators, Senior Management Team and class teachers.
- Inappropriate comments will be removed immediately. Screenshots will be taken and may be followed up with those who have posted.

DON'T

- Please do not mention children by name in any posts. We advise that you tag their parents.
- We advise that you do not send friend requests to staff. This is in line with our safe use of the internet and helps promote healthy working relations.
- Social media is not a forum to discuss day to day school business, teaching and learning or for posting general queries. You must contact the school via telephone, or pop in to see us.
- Please exercise caution when sharing something to the school page and check content carefully. It is not to be used to promote private businesses.
- Anyone who attempts to misuse the Facebook page or TWITTER account will be permanently BLOCKED.
- Children should not have social media accounts until they are the correct age. Please ensure privacy settings are appropriate and refer to terms and conditions. (FB – 13yrs, Twitter 16yrs, You tube 16years).