



# St Colman's Primary School

# Social Media Policy

**Updated: April 2024**

**Ratified by Governors: June 2024**

**Date of Review: April 2026**

This Social Media policy is one of a suite of Pastoral Policies that we rely upon in St. Colman's PS.

Each of these policies links to create a positive Pastoral care system dedicated to each of our children. In forming this policy, we have liaised with children, parents and staff and have employed an expert agency REIM Solutions to help us.

We have also used DENI Circular 2017/04, "***Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools- A Guide for Schools*** – Further updated 2023" as a core support in guiding our work in this area.

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another -Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and many other social network services are examples.

While recognising the benefits of social networks for instant and novel forms of communication, this policy sets out the principles that pupils are expected to follow when using social media. The Acceptable Use of the Internet, School's E-safety, Code of Conduct, Mobile 'Phone and Pastoral Care documents also inform this Policy.

This Policy applies to personal web space such as social networking sites on, for example, Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, SnapChat, Blogs, Twitter, chatrooms, WhatsApp, forums, podcasts, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as Flickr, TikTok and YouTube.

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. New APPS and trends appear constantly and are in vogue quickly. Further - often APPs disappear as quickly as they arrive.

This Policy covers the use of existing and future social networking and social communication platforms.

The school promotes a preventative curriculum, and every opportunity is used to guide our children into making good choices. Our senior pupils have focus sessions with REIM Training Solution each year where they learn about safe use of technology, the internet and social media.

It should be noted that school cannot take responsibility for, manage or investigate social media issues between pupils that happen out of school. Parents have ultimate responsibility for overseeing their child's use of the internet or social media at home or when involved in out of school activities.

### **Guidelines for pupils**

**"Respect for yourself and consideration for others"** is our guiding principle.

**As our pupils are all primary aged- our overarching belief is that social media should not be used at all.**

This is the guiding principle that we will promote with our pupils. Each site has a published recommended age range.

Whilst bearing these age recommendations in mind we also understand that many of our pupils will still use social media.

As a school we will apply these guidelines:

- Pupils using social media must have and display respect for themselves.
- Pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame other pupils or any member of staff.
- Pupils must not use social media in a way that brings disrespect to our school.
- Photographs, videos or any image of pupils, staff or any member of our school community must not be published on a personal or public web space without prior permission from the school.
- Pupils and the wider school community should not post images or videos from school trips on any social media site.
- Social network sites should never be accessed within school.
- Use of/and communicating via ClassDojo falls within this policy and must be used for schoolwork only.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

### **Guidelines for staff**

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

- Staff must never add pupils as friends into their personal accounts.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times.
- Staff need to use social networking in a way that does not conflict with GTCNI or agreed professional standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the highest level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Posting derogatory comments about pupils, parents or colleagues is never acceptable.
- Staff are required to uphold the reputation of the school, to maintain reasonable standards in their own behaviour, and to uphold public trust in their profession.
- Staff may have legitimate reasons to use social network accounts to support learning in the classroom or, for example, to communicate with sports teams, outside agencies and providers. All social media uses must be approved by the principal in advance.
- When staff do use social media, they are always to model good and safe practice.
- Use of/and communicating via ClassDojo falls within this policy and must be used for schoolwork/school business communication with parents only.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the principal where it will be investigated. Where breaches of this policy have been proven to have occurred the Governors may begin disciplinary action.

### **Comments posted by Parents/Carers**

Parents and carers should be aware of their responsibilities regarding the use of social networking:

- Parents should not post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites. This is central to our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels/School Complaints' Policy rather than posting them on social networking sites- the school, the Education Authority and The CCMS have Complaints policies and procedures in place to support schools with this.
- Parents should not post defamatory, malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.
- Parents should not use social media to bring the school's reputation into disrepute.
- Use of/and communicating via ClassDojo falls within this policy and should be used for positive interaction with others.

Inappropriate use by parents should be referred to the school Principal where it will be investigated. The Board of Governors will also be informed.

The Board of Governors of St. Colman's PS reserves the right to seek legal advice in upholding this policy.

This policy was first ratified by the Board of Governors of St. Colman's PS at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Reviewed January 2021.

Reviewed April 2024.