



SAINTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

Supporting Child Protection

Reviewed: August 2022



A HOME-SCHOOL LINKS DOCUMENT

Rationale:

The widespread availability and use of social media applications has implications for Saintfield High School's duty to safeguard our pupils and staff. It is important that in today's society we are able to use these constantly evolving technologies and services effectively and safely.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Safeguard and protect all of our pupils and members of staff;
- Ensure that the reputation of the school and its governors is protected;
- Set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to the use of social media for educational, personal or recreational use;
- Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour through the use of social media is unacceptable and that, **where appropriate, school disciplinary or legal action may be taken.**

What is Social Media?

For the purpose of this policy, 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. Social networking websites, such as Facebook, 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, photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube and micro blogging services such as Twitter. 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 (*including online messaging services available on mobile phones, such as 'WhatsApp*), cameras, PDAs, Tablets, Portable Handheld Consoles, Games Consoles (*including online gaming environments*) or other handheld devices and any other emerging forms of communications technologies.

All pupils and staff of Saintfield High School must acknowledge that the information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007.

This policy is divided into the following sections:

- ❖ Guidance for parents/carers whose children attend Saintfield High School;
- ❖ The safeguarding and protection of Saintfield High School's pupils whilst in school;
- ❖ Strategies employed by Saintfield High School to safeguard pupils, and
- ❖ The safeguarding and protection of Saintfield High School's staff.

Parents/Carers:

- Parents/Carers are responsible for appropriately guiding and informing their children about the dangers posed by the Internet and the misuse of social media. Remember, emerging threats now accompany the rapid growth of social networking. The traditional 'stranger danger' education must be revised to acknowledge that the 'stranger' is now in your child's bedroom.
- If the school has been made aware that a pupil has been using social media outside of school to cyber-bully or discuss inappropriately another pupil or member of staff within the school community, the school wish to emphasise that it is the primary responsibility of parents/carers to assist their children in managing social media accounts, and to monitor use of these technologies outside of school. Additionally, the school will be available to discuss the impact of any misuse of social media outside of school.
- Saintfield High School asks that parents/carers use filtering software to block inappropriate sites for those pupils with access to the Internet outside of school (refer to page 8 for further guidance);
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to be aware of what pupils do online, and to know which websites/social networking sites they visit outside of school.
- Parents/carers and their children must acknowledge and understand that anything posted online, within the public domain, can be viewed, accessed and shared by anyone. Comments or images, once posted online, remain long after the material is deleted from your child's site. It is impossible to know who else has downloaded what your child has

written, or what search engine has stored a photo of your son/daughter.

Pupils:

- The use of mobile phones and any related devices, such as ipods/ipads/tablets are not permitted while in school;
- Sanctions will apply to any pupil caught using a mobile phone or related device (*including texting and/or accessing the Internet*);
- If the school has reason to believe that a pupil has used their mobile phone (or related device) on school premises to text or post a photograph or derogatory/malicious/offensive message online, discussing another pupil or member of staff within the school community, they will be subject to school sanctions and/or legal action;
- Pupils will not invite, accept or engage in communications with members of staff in any personal social media;
- Pupils, reinforced by their parents/carers, are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts;
- If pupils become worried or concerned by the misuse of social media, they are encouraged to speak to their parents/carers, or a member of staff within the school community. Pupils are aware of the Pupil Well-being structure within the school, including the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Bradley and the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Convill.

Strategies employed by Saintfield High School:

Saintfield High School will always strive to work in collaboration with parents/carers to ensure the safeguarding of all pupils within the school community.

- In school, the promotion of using social media technologies safely and appropriately is reinforced through a variety of subjects studied, including Information and Communications Technology and Learning for Life and Work lessons, and through relevant pastoral systems, such as assemblies, information sessions and Form Time.
- Through the C2K schools network, Saintfield High School's computer system uses filtering software to block inappropriate websites, and this security is constantly monitored.
- Monitoring of Internet Use (for pupils and staff):
 - Saintfield High School monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.
 - Users of Saintfield High School email and Internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.
- The misuse of social media by pupils, which ultimately leads (either directly or indirectly) to the distress of another member of the school community (both pupils and staff) will not be tolerated. **In accordance with Saintfield High School's Community Code of Conduct, the following sanctions may apply with regard to pupils' misuse of**

social media (*in all cases, parents/carers of the pupil(s) in question will be contacted*):

- **The detaining of pupils during leisure time or after school (either a single detention or a succession of detentions);**
- **The withdrawal of pupils from class;**
- **Engaging pupils in various forms of school community service;**
- **The suspension of pupils from school;**
- **The expulsion of pupils from school;**
- **There may be legal recourse.**

The following websites offer advice and guidance for children and young people, and their parents/carers, on how to stay safe whilst using social media and being online:

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children:
www.nspcc.org.uk

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust: www.suzylamplugh.org

Childnet International: www.childnet.com

Kidpower: www.kidpower.org

Barnardos: www.barnardos.org.uk

Safe Kids Worldwide: www.safekids.org

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP):
www.ceop.police.uk

Childline: www.childline.org.uk

Pan European Game Information (PEGI): www.pegi.info

Think U Know: www.thinkuknow..co.uk

UK – Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

Staff:

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Saintfield High School, and are strongly advised to not communicate with parents/carers in the same way;
- Any communication received from pupils on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Bradley, or the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs Convill;
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any pupil or member of staff in any social media, these must be reported immediately. When a member of staff is approached by a pupil informing him/her that he/she (or another pupil) has been mistreated through social media by a member of the school community (either student or staff), Mrs Bradley as Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Mrs Derby as Head of Pupil Well-being must be informed in the first instance. School sanctions and/or legal action will be determined following investigation.
- Members of Saintfield High School staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts, to reduce the risk of pupils and parents/carers having access to personal details. If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil has gained access to personal details, or if it is brought to their attention that a pupil has posted a comment about them online, they must inform both Mrs Derby and Mrs Bradley.

School sanctions and/or legal action will be determined following investigation.

- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with pupils and their parent/carers with regard to school business, nor should any such contact be accepted;
- 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 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. Please note, however, that the school would recommend that all staff refrain from communicating through social media with any ex-pupil;
- Staff are additionally advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.

Related Saintfield High School Policies:

- Child Protection Policy;
- Pupil Well-being Policy;
- Community Code of Conduct;
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy.