Holy Well National School
Social Media Policy
Addendum to Acceptable Use Policy

This Social Media Policy forms part of the Acceptable Use Policy for Holy Well NS. It was devised in conjunction with the staff of the school, the Parents Association and ratified by the Board of Management.

Addendum - Social Media

Introduction

Holy Well National School recognises and appreciates the important contribution that social media has made to enhance communication and interaction in the digital age in which we live. As a school community we believe that this resource if harnessed constructively, can be used to change and enhance the way we teach, learn and interact with one another. We acknowledge the influence social media has on communication and interaction allowing us to share information and opinions with a broad audience. We are committed to developing the technological and communication skills of our pupils by encouraging responsible and safe use of the internet. We believe this to be the shared responsibility of the parents, teachers, pupils and the wider school community.

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1. Definition

Social media is an umbrella term used to describe websites or internet applications that allow people to interact with each other, by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Websites and apps such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Whatsapp, Tiktok, Vimeo and Skype are a few examples of what media our children are using. Social media also include 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 is not exhaustive as technology is constantly developing new ways of communicating.

2. Rationale

The mission statement of Holy Well National School states that our school is a Catholic Primary school in which we strive to learn together in a happy and safe environment, where everyone is valued, respected and encouraged to do their best. Holy Well National School acknowledges the positive role the internet plays in the education of our pupils, however, as a school we wish to alert pupils to the scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of social media sites which can lead to bullying, harassment and access to inappropriate or illegal material while online or where victims can be subjected to inappropriate and unsolicited comments. The staff of Holy Well National School acknowledge that this negative commentary on social media is not confined to the classroom but can extend into the wider community often having damaging consequences for victims. We recognise that this new virtual playground is often unsupervised and unregulated. The devising of this policy is a response to this new reality, calling all of us as a school community to come together and teach responsible internet use.

3. Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking by all pupils, parents/guardians and school staff. Due to the diverse nature of access to social media, this policy relates to all such interactions both during and outside of normal school hours and includes the use of social media applications on school and personal devices. Social media applications include, ***but are not limited to:***

- Twitter, Blogs
- Photo and media sharing services e.g. Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok
- Online discussion forums e.g Netmums
- Collaborative spaces e.g Facebook
- Messenger apps e.g Whatsapp, Snapchat, Wechat, Facebook messenger
- Games/apps- Roblox, Clash of clans, Xbox console and games, Playstation console and games
- Video Conferencing apps like Zoom, Vimeo etc.

4. Aims of this policy are:

- to identify strategies for students that will enable them to use social media safely and responsibly
- to safeguard pupils, staff and members of the school community from the negative effects of social networking sites; safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites; to protect the integrity and good names of all members of the school community from online abuse
- to clarify what the school considers to be appropriate or inappropriate use of social networking sites
- to outline behaviours which are unacceptable and the consequences for engaging in these
- to outline procedures for school community members who find themselves the victims of inappropriate social media behaviour

- to establish the role of teachers and parents in encouraging safer internet use and reporting of incidents.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board of Management will approve the policy and ensure its implementation, development and evaluation.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal will be responsible for the dissemination of the policy; the application of sanctions; and together with the Parents' Association will schedule workshops and guest speakers on this topic.
- Class teachers and parents will advise children on safe internet use. Teachers will teach the children from Third to Sixth class the internet safety lessons from Webwise.ie
- The staff and parents of Holy Well will outline unacceptable uses of Social Media to pupils
- Children and parents will be expected to read, understand and sign Our School Internet Safety Contract.
- Teachers will report incidents of online bullying to the Principal and be mindful of the obligations under Child Protection Guidelines
- The school community will provide support for those who have been victims of online bullying

6. General Principles of Safe and Responsible use of Social Media

- Under GDPR – The digital age of consent is 16 years in Ireland and is designed to protect the personal information of children. The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media and internet company can collect, process and store their data. In May 2018, the EU adopted a new set of Data Protection Regulations. These requirements also state the processing of data of children under the age of 16, in respect of online services, shall not be lawful without parental consent.
- Giving permission to your child to set up a social media account while they are underage can engage your child in a world they are unprepared for.
- Users of social media should be selective about what they share. Everything happens in front of a vast, invisible and often anonymous audience. Once you post something, it doesn't disappear as it can be copied and forwarded easily and quickly. Everything leaves a digital footprint. Users should never post personal details such as your phone number, email address or home address.
- Users should be selective with friends. Be careful when making friends online. In general, it is better to restrict friends to people you know and trust. Talk to parents before adding new friends or people unknown to you. For parents, the key to keeping your child safe online is to ensure that the people they are interacting with online are also known to them in real life friends and family).
- Users should never post their location. Facebook lets users post their location on every post. Children should not do this for safety and privacy reasons.
- Users should use strict privacy settings. Review all of the options on the privacy settings page. Many sites default settings tend to keep information public until a user makes it private.

- If your profile is linked to your mobile phone, you should use the websites privacy settings to ensure your phone numbers not visible.
  Chat/VoIP services (These allow for communication that may be typed or spoken with or without webcam access). You should only communicate with people you trust and remember that others may be able to view all aspects of communication.

7. Terms of Use

Members of the school community must adhere to the following Terms of Use. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally facing uses such as blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on a school network or not. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right of freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. At Holy Well NS, we expect that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration of the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use:

Communication between Pupils/Parents/School Staff

- If approved in certain circumstances, communication between pupils and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- Communication between all members of the school community(pupils, parents, staff) must be respectful at all times. Social media applications must not be used to communicate in an abusive or hateful manner and must not breach the schools Anti-bullying Policy.
- Teachers can be contacted via the school phone number or via school email addresses. Staff should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal email addresses to pupils or parents.
- Staff should not request, nor respond to, any personal contact made to them by a pupil or parent on a social media site and should inform school management immediately of same.
- Members of the school community need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside school, that they give due regard to the potential consequences of such comments. Making comments or allegations on social networking sites about others connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs or messages, that may bring a person, persons or the school into disrepute.

Guidelines for staff on the use of Social Media Sites

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Principal. We acknowledge that there are many platforms which can be of great use to children's educational and social development and sites such as Seesaw, Zoom, Holy Well NS App etc are currently in use in our school. Staff are expected to exercise sound judgement and maintain the highest professional standards while using social media in the school.

Personal use of Social Media

The use of Social Media sites by staff is governed by the Code of Professional Conduct from the Teaching Council. Registered teachers should:

- Communicate effectively with pupils, colleagues, parents, school management and others in a manner that is professional, collaborative and supportive, and based on trust and respect
  Ensure that any communication with pupils/ students, colleagues, parents and school management is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as email, texting and social networking sites
- Ensure that they do not knowingly access, download or otherwise have in their possession while engaged in school activities, inappropriate or illegal materials/images in electronic or any other format
- Staff are encouraged to use the privacy settings on social media sites/apps and to keep updated on developments on privacy restrictions.

Unacceptable uses of Social Media sites and their consequences

Users are responsible for their own behaviour when communicating on social media and will be held accountable for the content of their communications that they post on social media locations.

8. Cyberbullying Definition (refer to Anti-Bullying Policy)

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time, day or night. Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying.

Bullying and cyberbullying are defined in *The Anti- Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post primary schools 2013 p.* 8 as:

2.1.1 ………..bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

2.1.2 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

(i) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;

(ii) cyber-bullying; and

(iii) identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

2.1.3 In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people <u>will be regarded as bullying behaviour.</u>

2.1.4 Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging <u>do not</u> fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation. Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

9. Unacceptable use of Social Media

- Pupils are not permitted to access to social networking sites during the school day.
- Pupils are not allowed to have mobile phones in school, unless parents/guardians have written a letter to the Principal requesting permission for their child to have a mobile phone for an essential reason and outlining the reason, otherwise phones will be confiscated if they are visible in school. (see to Mobile Phone Policy).
- Sending or posting discriminatory, harassing, negative comments, threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of the school community. Forwarding, 'Liking' or commenting on material that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party.
- Posting photos of others without their consent or tagging members of the school community in photos without their consent
- Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the school's image or a person's reputation.
- Creating a fake profile that impersonates any other member of the school community.
- Sending or posting material that is confidential to the school.
- Participating in the viewing or exchanging of inappropriate images or obscene material.

While all cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis, the school and the Board of Management considers the above to be serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour. Disciplinary action will be taken in the case of inappropriate use of social media tools.

10. Sanctions for Policy Infringements

Infringements of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including (but not exclusively):

- Suspension of digital privileges in school
- Confiscation of devices if found on school grounds or on school related activities
- Notification to parents and/or sanction
- Suspension from school and/or school-related activities
- Exclusion
- Legal action and/or prosecution

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the staff of Holy Well National School in conjunction with the Principal and the Board of Management. Reviews will be undertaken as deemed necessary. A major review will be undertaken three years subsequent to the date of implementation.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 27th October 2022.

Aidan Crowley   *Diarmuid Cogan*
Principal   Chairperson

Appendix 1

Internet Safety Contract- Rules for Responsible Internet Use

Third – Sixth class

These rules will help to keep us safe and help us to be fair to others. Please read through these rules carefully with your child.

- I will follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow offline.
- I will use ICT e.g. iPads, laptops, internet etc. in school for school purposes only. I will be responsible for my behaviour when using ICT because I know that these rules are to keep me safe.
- I will immediately report any damage or faults involving equipment or software, however this may have happened.
- I will not bring in mobile devices such as phones, cameras, memory sticks, software from outside school to use in school or take them on school trips.
- I will ask the permission of the teacher before using the internet at school.
- I will only open/delete my own files. I will not access other people's files.
- I will only send email messages, using a class or school email address with my teacher's approval. The messages I send will be polite and responsible.
- I will not use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom
- I will only open email attachments from people I know, or whom my teacher has approved.
- I will treat my username and password like my toothbrush – I will not share it nor will I use any other person's username or password.
- I will not make negative comments, forward comments or 'like' negative comments/ images of others in the school community.
- I will not engage in cyber-bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct towards others in school or out of school.
- I will tell a teacher/parent if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate or harmful content (images, messages or posts) online.
- I will not deliberately look for, save or send anything that could be inappropriate or offensive. If I accidentally find anything like this, I will close the screen and tell a teacher/parent immediately as this will protect me and other children.
- I will STOP, BLOCK, TELL if I experience cyber-bullying
- I will not give my full name, my home address or telephone number or those of any others online.
- I will not agree to meet someone I met online in real life.
- I will STOP, BLOCK, TELL if a stranger on the internet tries to contact me

- I understand the school can check my computer files and the internet sites I visit, and that my parent/guardian will be contacted if a member of staff is concerned about my safety.
- I understand that the school also has the right to take action against me if I am involved in incidents of inappropriate behaviour when I am out of school and where they involve my membership of the school community e.g. Cyberbullying, use of images or personal information.
- I understand that if I fail to obey the Rules for Responsible Internet Use Agreement, I will be subject to disciplinary action.

Child: As a school user of the internet, I have read the Rules for Responsible Internet Use with my parents/guardians, and I agree to comply with them and behave in a responsible way when online at home and at school.

Parent: I have read the Rules for Responsible Internet Use with my child. I understand that some material found on the internet may be objectionable and I accept responsibility for setting standards for my child when selecting, sharing and exploring information on the internet.

Parent/Guardian signature on behalf of child:

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Appendix 2

Internet Safety Advice for Parents

- Be informed about your child's internet use so that going online is a positive experience for you and your child.
- Discover the internet together. Parental guidance on internet use places your child at an advantage and develops a positive attitude to internet exploration making it easier to share positive and negative experiences in the future.
- Teach your child how to evaluate and criticise the information they read online for truth and accuracy.
- Agree with your child rules for internet use in your home.
  - Discuss an acceptable length of time for your child to use the internet. Experts say that time spent online should not affect sleep, exercise or time with family. Have screen free hours at home.
  - Do not let your child have their internet device in their bedroom. Internet use should be in a common space to encourage openness and to enable monitoring.

- Agree on how to treat personal information. Encourage your child never to give out personal name, address, username, password or location. Check your child's privacy settings and location settings.

- Teach your child to protect their phone with a password and encourage them to share the password with you. Starting this practice at a young age can help you gain access to your child's virtual world. Keep track of your child's password. You should be able to check it whenever you feel you need to, and a condition of them being on any social networks should be that they inform you of any password changes.
- Set up a family email address that your child can use when signing in to new games and websites online. When gaming online, encourage your child to use a nickname for their password.
- Agree on what types of sites and activities are OK in your family. Be involved with the sites your child is engaged with and know how they work. Use filtering software designed to help parents limit the web-sites children can access.
- Make sure the games your child is playing are suitable and age appropriate. Call of Duty: Black Ops and Grand Theft Auto or other 15, 18 age-rated games are unsuitable for primary school children. Social media sites like TikTok, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter etc. have an age rating of 13. Primary school children should not be using them. The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16.
- Discuss how to behave towards others when gaming, chatting, emailing and messaging. Encourage your child be responsible for what they post online.
  Encourage them to own up if they are wrong. We are all learning about responsible internet use. Encourage your child to **THINK** before they post by asking the questions:
  Is it true?   Is it helpful?   Is it illegal?   Is it necessary?   Is it kind?

- Teach your child that all comments posted online can be traced to the IP address of their internet device. Nothing is anonymous.

Be aware that some social media sites are set up by unknown groups with different agendas.

- Your child may be at risk.
- Regularly review the social media app your child is using and the social networking private settings. Many social networks are set to public by default meaning anyone can see your child's posts, pictures, videos etc. We recommend using the 'friends only' setting.
- Teach your child that posting a photograph online has ramifications. The image is there forever, and it can be passed on and exploited. Children should know that what they upload online can follow them around for years beyond the date it was uploaded.
- Teach your child that once you upload any content on the internet it is there permanently and you can never remove it. Anyone could have it saved, forwarded, shared or screenshotted, even if your child has deleted soon afterwards.
- Teach your child that Zoom, Skype, Facetime and other webcam sites are for family and closely selected friends.
- Be careful about allowing your child free access to YouTube as they can gain access to a lot of inappropriate material. Dangerous challenges that are posted on YouTube encourage children to copy them.
- Be aware if you child has posted images or videos of themselves on YouTube or elsewhere online. The Internet has a vast audience. Making a video and posting it on YouTube is dangerous.
- Talk about the risks associated with meeting online 'friends' in person. Teach your child not to meet anyone, stranger or otherwise, without your permission.
- Disable the In-App Purchase function in your phone or device settings. Many apps and games give their users the option of buying additional game functionality, additional points/bonuses etc. Children can easily make purchases without realising.
- Report online material you may consider illegal to the appropriate authorities.
- Encourage respect for others and help stamp out cyber-bullying. Encourage your children to **STOP**, **BLOCK** and **TELL** if they are being cyberbullied. Do not retaliate. Record everything- keep all text messages, keep a note of calls, screen shot images and messages.
- If you child is being cyberbullied:
  - Establish with your child that they can come to you about anything negative that happens to them online, no matter how shocking.
  - Praise your child for coming forward to tell you.
  - Stay calm and don't overreact.
  - Listen supportively, don't interrogate.
  - Establish what has taken place and in what context.
  - Save any evidence, take screenshots etc.
  - Encourage your child not to reply to any messages. Block the user from your child's profile, revisit your child's privacy settings, and delete and block any other 'virtual friends'.
  - Report incidences of cyber-bullying to the website apps or service providers using the reporting tools.
  - Encourage your child to continue to **STOP, BLOCK, TELL**
  - Talk to your child's teacher. If the cyberbullying is of a very serious nature, you may wish to speak to the Gardaí
    - Establish the facts and find out what role your child played. Even if your child was part of a group with a minor role, it needs to be addressed.

- Encourage your child to 'own up' to the part that they played. Do not cover up for them. They can learn from their mistakes.
- Talk with your child and help them see where they were wrong. Ask what better options were available to them.
- Ask them to think about the victim. Ask them to establish how the victim might feel after the cyber-bullying experience. Encourage empathy.
- Encourage your child to make a meaningful apology.
- Do your best to restore the relationship.
- Monitor your child's interactions online for the foreseeable future.

- For tips on how to use Seesaw and Zoom safely, please refer to the Remote Learning Section of our Acceptable Use Policy
- If you are unsure when it comes to the Internet, gaming, social media and general technology, be open and seek help from the school or friends. We are all learning!

Useful Internet safety sites and links:

www.webwise.ie www.digizen.org

www.esafety.ie

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.netsmatz.org www.zeeko.ie

www.commonsensemedia.ie

http://www.saferinternet.org/

www.internetmatters.org www.saferinternetday.ie