

Social Media Acceptable Use Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management of Gorey Central School is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking and media sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications and media sites bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly, for educational purposes. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation and the safety of our pupils and staff. This policy and associated guidance was drafted in consultation with the staff, parents and pupils to protect staff and pupils and to advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard the children in our care each day. The policy requirements in this document aim to create a balanced approach to support innovation in learning whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Gorey Central School recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our students enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life. This Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our students are expected to follow when using school technologies for school activities of any nature.

1.0 Social Media

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To encourage safe and responsible use of social media, as appropriate, within the school
- To ensure that the school is not exposed to legal risks
- To ensure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- To ensure that our users are able to clearly distinguish whether information provided via social media applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Most social media sites are targeted at older teenagers and adults and to reflect this, they have age restrictive registration policies. However, in reality, it is still possible for children under the age of thirteen to register using false information. Being mindful of this, as parents, guardians and educators, we need to be vigilant of the children's use of social media and educate them about the importance of safety online.

1.2 Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all pupils and staff in our school. The requirements of this policy apply to all aspects of social media which are used for any school related purpose or issues pertaining to Gorey Central School, regardless of whether the persons involved are contributing in an official capacity to social media applications provided by external organisations or otherwise. Social media applications include, **but are not limited to:**

- Blogs, e.g. Blogger Twitter

- Online discussion forums, e.g. netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces e.g. Facebook
- Media sharing services, e.g. YouTube

All school representatives 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 etc.

1.3 Use of Social Media during school-time

Use of social media in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Principal or a staff member is on a sanctioned break.

1.4 Social Networking as part of School Service

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must first be approved by the Principal. We acknowledge that there are many sites which can be of great use to the children's educational and social development and sites such as GoNoodle, Class Dojo etc. are currently in use in our school. Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Principal. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

1.5 Terms of Use

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use:

(These apply to all school representatives using any social media applications).

This includes, but is not limited to, public-facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing applications such as project blogs, regardless of whether they are hosted on the school network or not. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. We at Gorey Central School expect that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use:

1.5.1 Social Media / Networking applications

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes, but is not limited to, material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies
- Must not be used to discuss or advise anything relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school

- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Principal.
 - Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.
- Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

1.5.2 Guidance/protection for staff on the use of social media

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18
- No member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting or requesting them as a friend.

1.5.3 Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- All mobile phones must be handed up to the class teacher at the beginning of the school day.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Principal. Parents will be informed if this happens and consequences of these actions may result in loss of privileges which mirrors the school's Code of Discipline policy.
- No school devices are to be used to access social networking sites at any time during the school day.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment.
- Any improper contact or cyber bullying of any kind should be reported to the class teacher / principal as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying.
- No pupil may upload content to Youtube, Vimeo, Snapchat or alternative sites, relating to themselves and /or other pupils while on school grounds, school trips, and/or in school uniform.
- No pupil may upload content to Youtube, Vimeo, Snapchat or alternative sites, relating to any staff member or to any physical aspect of the school grounds. i.e. photo of the school, **at any time.**

1.5.4 Netiquette

Netiquette is defined as "appropriate social behaviour on computer networks, in particular, in the online environment".

To this end:

- Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
- Students should also recognise that, alongside the valuable content online, there is also unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.
- Students should not post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see.

Failure to abide by these rules within school will result in the removal of use of any ICT devices and parents will be notified immediately. ICT privileges will be restored when the principal and / or teacher deem a child has regained their trust with regard to social media and ICT usage.

Failure to abide by these rules outside of school with any issues pertaining to Gorey Central School will result in the removal of use of any ICT devices in school and parents will be notified immediately. ICT privileges will be restored when the principal and teacher deem a child has regained their trust with regard to internet use and ICT usage. Gorey Central School can take no responsibility for how parents or guardians police ICT and internet use outside of school hours but would request that parents be vigilant in their children's internet and ICT usage away from school.

Incidents of a serious nature that directly affect or implicate Gorey Central School will follow the same consequences as the school Code of Discipline policy regardless of whether the incidents take place in school or outside of school.

1.6 Child protection guidance

If any member of staff receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person / Deputy Designated Liaison Person
- The disclosure should be recorded by the DLP / DDLP in line with the child protection policy, and Tusla should be contacted for guidance.
- Procedure as advised by Tusla will be followed, and the necessary authorities contacted.

1.7 Cyber Bullying

- By adopting this policy regarding the use of social media sites on school premises, Gorey Central School protects itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.
- Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.
- Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school*.
- Once a disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve all parties involved and their families. This should be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying policy.
- If parent(s) / guardian(s) refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment

**While incidents occurring outside of school is not our responsibility as such, we will endeavour to assist in brokering a solution between parties involved. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.*

1.8 Technologies Covered

Gorey Central School may provide students with Internet access via desktop computers, digital imaging equipment, laptop or tablet devices, video-conferencing capabilities, virtual learning environments, online collaboration capabilities, online discussion forums, blogs and more.

The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all online technologies used in the school, not just those specifically mentioned.

1.9 Gorey Central School Mobile Devices

Gorey Central School may provide students with mobile computers, digital recorders, I pads or other devices to promote learning inside the school. Students should abide by the same expected use policies, when using devices for school purposes or any issue pertaining to Gorey Central School outside of school as they would within Gorey Central School.

Students are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction of devices to their teacher immediately. Use of school-issued mobile devices will be monitored within school.

1.9.1 Mobile devices in the possession of Gorey Central School students

Students may not use personally owned devices in school (e.g. laptops, tablets-computers, digital-cameras and smart-phones) for any purpose, unless explicitly stated in notes read and signed by parents/guardians or in cases where students have been granted laptops by the Department of Education.

Students are permitted to have a mobile phone in school once it's switched off and handed to class teachers at the start of a school day. If parents need to contact children during the school day this must be done through the school office. A letter requesting that children are in possession of a mobile phone within school must be written to the Principal, Mr. Bater.

Failure to abide by this rule will result in the confiscation of the device and a parent will be notified to retrieve it.

1.10 Gorey Central School Security

We ask that our students remain vigilant when using the internet within school and that they report anything that may cause them alarm to teachers immediately. They must not click on anything they feel is not appropriate to view. If they believe a computer or mobile device they are using might be infected with a virus, they must alert their teacher.

1.11 Personal Safety

If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, they must bring it to the immediate attention of

- a teacher if they are at school
- a parent / guardian if they are at home

Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers, birth-dates, images of themselves or video content of themselves over the Internet without adult permission and supervision.

Students should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission and supervision.

1.12 Cyber Bullying

While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013**, states:

'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 will be regarded as bullying behaviour.'

Harassing, humiliating, denigrating, derogatory, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will not be tolerated in Gorey Central School and will be dealt with in line with the school Anti-Bullying policy.

1.12.1 Cyber bullying Advice

- Students must not send messages or post comments or photographs with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges.
- In some cases, cyber-bullying is a crime.
- The school will support students, teachers and parents in dealing with cyber-bullying.

Gorey Central School is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0065/2011) and will act as required by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Health Service Executive.

1.13 Violations of this Acceptable Use Policy

Violations of this policy in Gorey Central School will have disciplinary repercussions, in accordance with Gorey Central School's Code of Discipline and the Anti-Bullying (including Cyber Bullying) policies. Repeated misdemeanours will result in the suspension of computer privileges and, in cases which are deemed serious enough by the Board of Management, temporary or permanent expulsion from Gorey Central School.

1. 14 Success Criteria

- Ensure a safe environment for all our children.
- Increase awareness among the children, staff and relevant school stakeholders i.e. parents, about appropriate use of social media and respect each other's privacy.

Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis due to constantly changing landscape of social media and the internet.

We aim to review this plan every 3 months with the first review taking place in April 2018.

To be signed by Board of Management

This Policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible on the school website at www.goreycentral.com or in paper format at parental request. A copy of this policy will also be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Members of the school staff updated this version of the school's Social Media Acceptable Use Policy in January 2018. It will be reviewed every 3 months or if the need arises.

1 APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE USE

I will:

- Use school equipment for school-related activities only.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert teachers if there is any problem with their use.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use a blog or represent the school online.
- Alert a teacher if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, postings) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for learning/educational reasons.
- Recognise that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

2 APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE USE

I will not:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others.
 - Search inappropriate images or content.
 - Engage in cyber-bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
 - Attempt to find ways to change the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
 - Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
 - Plagiarise content (copy, use as their own, without citing the original creator) I find online.
 - Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others or agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
 - Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
 - Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
 - Attempt to access sites, servers, accounts, or content that isn't intended for my use.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.