

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Definition

Morningside Primary School defines Social Media as the use of web-based and mobile technologies which enable communication to be spontaneous, interactive, educational and anonymous. Furthermore, it is defined as an unlimited resource available for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

Purpose

Social Media at Morningside Primary is confined to the use of learners and educators to bring the classroom to life. This includes but is not confined to Google, YouTube, Pinterest, Flickr, Tumblr and Wikis.

The school does not support the use of tablets and cellphones in every day lessons. Communication tools such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram etc. are restricted to private use and must not be entertained whilst in control of any child at any time. School computers may not be used for any of the above communication mediums.

Responsibility of the Morningside Primary School Community

The school provides access to the internet and associated technologies because it believes that these bring value to teaching and learning. It is expected that they will be used to benefit staff and students, but it is also understood that they may be used to engage in personal activities.

Responsibility of users of any Social Media that has any link or reference to the children, staff and parents of Morningside Primary School must be based on good judgment, common sense and an acute level of proficiency in what they are doing .

It is the duty and responsibility of every user to be aware of any ramifications of unintentional or intentional inflammatory remarks, derogatory speech, racist slants, offensive language and cyber bullying. The values which the school promulgates must be evident in the usage of electronic devices in and outside the school.

The Governing Body, Principal and Staff will not support any member of the community who is proven to have brought the name of the school into disrepute.

Responsibility of the school.

In the interest of maintaining a safe environment, the school reserves the right to conduct an audit of its computer network, internet access facilities and computers. This may include any stored content and all aspects of its use, including email. An audit may include any device provided by or subsidised by the school. The school further reserves the right to request that any person, staff member, pupil or parent on school property divulge the contents of any information/images which the Principal feels may place the remaining members of the school community in danger either physically or reputationally. The school reserves the right to deploy filtering and/or monitoring software where appropriate, to restrict access to certain sites and data. Filtering should enhance the teaching and learning process rather than restrict it.

Confidential Information

No member of the Morningside Primary School community, including parents, may post information on any social media which would be deemed to be private and confidential to the subject person in question. Governing Body members and all staff who have signed confidentiality agreements are bound by the agreement in terms of the use of computers and/or cellphones.

Discretion must be used when displaying images or videos where children are present. Where possible, permission must be sought from a parent if a child's photo is to be used publically e.g. d6, newspaper articles etc.

Policy Non-Negotiables

For pupils, school staff and parents

- When teachers allow the use of any social media or devices inside or outside the classroom, the usage thereof must be considered an extension of the curriculum and must fall within the ambit of the lesson content. If it would not be permitted in the classroom then it must be deemed unacceptable.
- Nothing should take place online that would ruin an individual's reputation and/or the school's reputation.
- Bullying, insensitive texting, pornography and hate speech is forbidden.
- Unless the cellphone is being used in a lesson by the teacher as a means of communicating with parents of errant children, in an emergency or possibly by a pupil during a presentation, cellphones may not be operated in the classroom, on the corridors or in the presence of any child at any activity
- The abuse of confidential or privileged information by staff, parents and pupils is forbidden.
- Teachers MAY NOT befriend current pupils on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or Snapchat, except in the case of a site specifically set up for professional purposes.
- Ignorance of the user is no excuse for the breach of the school policy.
- Reputational damage caused to the school by the user can and will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- A parent may not claim ignorance of any misdemeanour caused by their child in the use and abuse of any social media or devices. Parents must accept the role they play in monitoring and managing the private activities of their children.
- Should the school establish a Facebook account, no person may "tag" the school without permission from the Principal.

For pupils

- Under no circumstances may pupils handle the laptops belonging to the school. Pupils may operate them provided that the teacher is physically standing next to the user.
- Permission must be granted from the teacher in charge of the lesson before any website may be entered.
- It is strictly forbidden to enter any chat room or gaming sites while using school computers, while on school property or when representing the school.
- Children must take responsibility for everything they write or view. Social media venues are open to the public and irreparable damage can be caused.

- Children must not publish photographs, personal details such as surnames, phone numbers, physical addresses and birth dates if their location/destination cannot be guaranteed as 100% safe and without recourse.
- Where there is a possibility that you may be associated with Morningside Primary School, the child should act in a manner which is consistent with the general philosophies and values of the school.
- Plagiarism is against the law. Pupils may not copy verbatim from someone else's work without giving the writer due recognition.
- Any pupil encountering inappropriate material that they feel their parents or the staff of the school would not accept, must report it immediately.

For school employees using social media.

- Do not accept pupils as friends on personal social networking sites: decline any pupil-initiated friend request. Do not initiate on-line friendships with pupils.
- It must always be borne in mind that a "friend" has the ability to download and share your information with people you do not know.
- Be conservative in anything you post. Once posted, it cannot be retrieved.
- Do not discuss pupils, colleagues, parents, departmental officials or publicly criticize school or departmental policies. The Admin Law dictates that it is the responsibility of the Admin person in any chat group to control or report misuse. The Admin host is liable for any legal action which may follow on from any chat group which they have established.
- Always have a clear and full understanding of why you are using the networking tool.
- Before posting anything, consider any possible consequences to yourself or to the recipient/s.
- The use of any social media is a voluntary communicative tool for any staff member. All actions, texts, posts etc. are done and received in a private capacity. Whilst the school can and will take action (legal if necessary) against users whose comments made on social media about employees and associated role players in the organisation are unsavoury, the school has no jurisdiction over comments made by staff members in a personal capacity if the comments do not pertain to any school matters.
- Your behavioural use of social media must serve as a role model to the children you teach.