Social Media Policy

At Rathmichael Parish National School, we use social media platforms to connect with our school community, the parish and prospective future families. This connection brings opportunity to engage and communicate and this may include showcasing pupil work, activities, events and educational content. The social media platforms we use to do this are Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Rathmichael Parish National School takes the responsibility of social media very seriously, always maintaining our school reputation and the safety and privacy of our pupils and staff.

This policy outlines our school's approach to social media. Such communication, through our official channels is regarded as professional. This policy encourages the safe, positive and responsible use of social media in the context of our school community. Our pupils are taught about the safe, ethical and responsible use of the Internet through direct teaching and classroom practice. This policy applies to all staff members and pupils, whilst acknowledging their rights to accessing social media in their own private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/ or the school reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Overall approach:

- The social media accounts are set up by the AP2 for ICT in consultation with the Principal. The AP2 stores the account details and passwords securely and monitors the accounts regularly.
- Our AP2 for ICT collaborates with the Principal, staff, parish and PTA on content posted to our social media accounts and assumes responsibility for uploading to these accounts.
- Photographs or movies that show pupils' faces will not be posted without written parental permission- this is in line with other school digital policy.
- The school's social media is not used for promotion of personal financial interests, commercial venture or personal campaigns.
- Communications will be appropriate, professional and respectful at all times. The tone shall be engaging, conversational, informative and friendly. Content that may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection, confidentiality or other claims for damages will not be posted.

Staff responsibilities:

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil or past pupil under the age of 18 on social networking sites. If a staff member discovers that an adult employed by the school is using a social media site in an inappropriate manner, they should report this to the Designated Liaison Person/ Deputy Liaison Person. This report should be recorded in line with the school's Child Protection Policy.
- Staff should not upload pupil photos through their personal social media accounts.
- No school devices may be used to access social media.
- Staff should be aware that content within social media posts are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation.

Pupil responsibilities:

- No pupil may access social media during the school day.
- No pupil should attempt to connect with a member of staff through social media.
- No school devices may be used to access social media.
- No pupil may upload content to social media of themselves and/ or other pupils while on school grounds, trips or in school uniform.
- The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyber bullying.
- Improper conduct should be reported to school staff and the Principal without delay.

Handling abuse:

- If a conversation turns negative or abusive, the school should block, report or delete the users and their comments.
- As part of our social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for posts about the school.
- If content on our social media pages brings a complaint or objection, the content will be taken down.

This policy shall be reviewed annually.