

# MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Tomorrow's Success Begins Today.... 

# Social Media Policy

## Introduction

The Internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopedias such as Wikipedia.

While recognising the benefits of these media as new opportunities for communication and the positive impact it can have on teaching and learning and on promoting the life of the school, this policy sets out the principles that all staff/governor members in Markethill Primary School are expected to follow when using social media.

The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff/governor members use social media responsibly, so that confidentiality of young people, staff and the reputation of Markethill PS are safeguarded.

Staff/governor members also must be conscious at all times of the need to keep separate their personal lives and associations with Markethill Primary School.

## Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- teaching staff;
- non-teaching staff; and
- governors.

These individuals are collectively referred to as 'members' in this policy. This policy applies to all of the young people who receive their education at Markethill Primary School.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites that may be hosted and maintained on behalf of Markethill Primary School. In this policy we define social media to mean:

*'Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.'*

The Internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging social media sites, however the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the site.

## Legal Framework

Markethill Primary School is committed to ensuring that all members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards.

All individuals working on behalf of Markethill Primary School are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- person-identifiable information e.g. young people and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998
- information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality.

Members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Please note that Markethill Primary School could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render Markethill Primary School liable to the injured party.

### **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Markethill PS is committed to ensuring that young people are safeguarded in all aspects of their lives and that individuals can expect to feel safe and be kept safe in their home and school environment.

Safeguarding and child protection covers and is related to a number of areas which relate to the risks of young people being for example:

- sexually exploited and a victim of child sexual exploitation
- becoming radicalised
- going missing
- becoming involved in gang culture or crime
- becoming the victims of crime.

All of the above areas can be related to E-safety as the internet and social media are used to groom and exploit young people after gaining their confidence and adults or other young people seeking to form relationships.

All pupils and their parents are responsible for completing an E-safety agreement for the use of all technological devices and software programmes within the school.

If an E-safety incident occurs regarding a young person, staff will follow a set procedure and report this incident to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Mrs McCool. The DT will make a decision about the immediate action needing to be taken and if the child protection policy needs to be evoked.

There are strict guidelines set out in the school's E-safety policy regarding how staff monitor the use of the internet and social media by young people in order to ensure they are being safeguarded. Please refer to the E-safety policy.

Markethill Primary School has a software security system that enables Internet sites/programmes to be blocked by the moderators of the system who are the E-safety champions and senior managers. Markethill Primary School's primary aim is to educate young people to feel and be safe when using the internet and social media as well as to enjoy exploring and being able to be creative.

### **Related Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- E-safety policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

### **Policy Principles**

1. Staff members and governors need to be professional, responsible and respectful when using social media.
2. Staff must not make reference to their day to day work at Markethill Primary School or give any details about their roles which identify Markethill Primary School as their place of work as this is a breach of confidentiality.
3. Staff must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate. They should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work and personal interests.
4. Staff/governors must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Markethill Primary School into disrepute.
5. Staff/governors must not represent their personal views as those of Markethill Primary School on any social medium.
6. Staff/governors must not discuss personal information about young people and professionals within Markethill Primary School on social media.
7. Staff/governors must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame young people, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations or Markethill Primary School.
8. Staff/governors must not use social media to express their discontent about their own role or any aspect about how Markethill Primary School operates. If there are any issues for staff in these areas, they must use the appropriate channels to raise them with the Principal.
9. Staff must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of Markethill Primary School.

### **Personal Use of Social Media**

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with anyone under the age of sixteen from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Markethill Primary School.
- Staff should show discretion if communicating with parents from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Markethill Primary School.
- Any communication received from persons under the age of sixteen on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated teacher for Child Protection (Mrs P McCool).

- If any member of staff/governor is aware of any inappropriate communication involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email communication between staff and parents on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with parents on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Principal e.g. medical emergency.
- 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/governors are advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school 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 16 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

### **Using social media on behalf of Markethill Primary School**

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs or videos of children without the written consent of parents/carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs or videos, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Staff should not store images of children on personal devices. Any images or videos taken of children for school social media purposes should be on a school device.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of the SLT.
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the About or Info page to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the school website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by Markethill Primary School.
- All content used on the official school sites must go through the administrators as they are the only people who can post on behalf of the school.

### **Monitoring of Internet Use**

Markethill Primary School monitors usage of its Internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

Users of the school's email and Internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the C2K ICT system.

**Breaches of the policy**

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken in line with the school’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of Markethill Primary School or any illegal acts or acts that render Markethill Primary School liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Contracted providers of Markethill Primary School services must inform the relevant Markethill Primary School manager immediately of any breaches of this policy so that appropriate action can be taken to protect confidential information and limit the damage to the reputation of Markethill Primary School. Any action against breaches should be according to contractors’ internal disciplinary procedures.

**Policy Review**

<b>Policy Agree Date</b>	<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Person Responsibility for Review</b>

Chairperson of The Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary to The Board of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_