

Castaheany Educate Together National School



# Social Media Policy

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## *School Details*

School Name: Castaheany Educate Together National School  
Roll Number: 20186F  
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## *Introduction and Aims of the Policy*

Social media is defined as any form of online publication that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, websites, Internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, School websites (including blogs). The policy is intended to provide guidance and direction on issues relating to the use of social media as outlined above, including the use of such services via mobile devices and smartphones.

This policy applies to pupils who have access to and are users of the internet in Castaheany Educate Together National School. It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who form part of the Castaheany Educate Together National School community. Due to the diverse nature of access to social media, it relates to all such interactions both during and outside of normal school hours, and includes the use of school and personal digital devices.

The aim of the Social Media policy is to offer guidance and direction to all members of the Castaheany ETNS community on the safe and responsible use of social media. It aims to produce a set of strategies for pupils that will allow them to use social media safely and responsibly. Unfortunately, there is scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of social media sites, which can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity while online. The policy therefore also aims to protect the integrity and good name of our school and of all members of the school community from online abuse.

Castaheany Educate Together National School will deal with incidents that take place outside the school that impact on the wellbeing of pupils or staff under this policy and associated codes of behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In such cases, Castaheany Educate Together National School will, where known, inform parents/carers of incidents of inappropriate online behaviour that take place out of school and impose the appropriate sanctions.

## *Strategies for Promoting Safe Use of the Internet*

Castaheany Educate Together National School implements the following strategies on promoting safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of internet safety as part of our implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Staff will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of internet safety.
- Castaheany Educate Together National School participates in Safer Internet Day activities to promote safer and more effective use of the internet.

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

- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Code of Good Behaviour
- Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers- Section 3  
Guidance for Registered Teachers About the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication

It is envisaged that the school community will review the Social Media Policy regularly. Before enrolling in the school, the Social Media Policy should be read carefully by parents/carers to ensure that the conditions of use are accepted and understood. It is assumed that the parent/carer accepts the terms of the Social Media Policy unless the school is specifically notified.

## *Acceptable Use and Guidelines for the use of Social Media*

Communication between pupils, parents/carers and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites and blogs.

Members of the school community need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of school, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social media about others connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs or videos which might bring the school into disrepute.

When using the internet, pupils, parents/carers and staff are expected to:

- Treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.
- Adhere to all regulations under the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
  - Copyrighted material should not be re-copied, republished, posted on a web page or multi-copied.
  - Recorded performances of copyrighted literary, dramatic or musical work should not be published or posted on social media/web pages.

## Pupils

- When using social media, pupils should be respectful in all their interactions with their classmates.
- Pupils must never use their Castaheany ETNS email account or password in conjunction with personal social media.
- Pupils must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Pupils should not identify the school or any members of the school community when publishing comments or material online.
- Pupils should not circulate images or videos of any members of the school community without permission.
- Pupils should not attempt to contact staff members via social media platforms.
- Pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, and other members of the Castaheany Educate Together National School community.
- Pupils must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Castaheany Educate Together National School community on social media.
- Pupils must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Castaheany Educate Together National School into disrepute.
- Pupils must not represent their personal views as those of being Castaheany Educate Together National School on any social media platform.

## Parents/Guardians

- Parents should be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions that apply to primary aged children. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Parents should monitor their children's online social media activity, and read the terms and conditions of the various Social Media platforms and applications their children are using.
- Parents should use school platforms such as Google Classroom and Aladdin for educational and daily communication purposes with the school. Private or sensitive

matters should be communicated by arranging a meeting or phone call with the relevant staff member.

- Parents should not attempt to contact staff members via social media platforms.
- Parents should not identify the school or any members of the school community when publishing comments or material online.
- Parents should promptly report to the school Principal any negative online activity relating to the school or to any members of the school community.
- Parents should not circulate images or videos of any members of the school community without permission.

## Staff members

- Staff members should ensure that their personal social media accounts remain personal in nature and are used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. Following this principle helps to ensure a distinction between sharing personal views and those of Castaheany ETNS.
- Staff members should not identify the school or any members of the school community when publishing comments or material on social media.
- Staff members must not use social media and the internet in any way to harass, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff, and other members of the Castaheany Educate Together National School community.
- Staff members must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Castaheany Educate Together National School community on social media.
- Staff members must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Castaheany Educate Together National School into disrepute.
- Staff members must not represent their personal views as those of being Castaheany Educate Together National School on any social media platform.
- Staff members must never use their Castaheany ETNS email account or password in conjunction with personal social media.
- Staff members should not use their personal profiles to conduct school business or communicate with pupils or parents/carers on school matters. Communication should be made through the agreed school channels only: school email, school telephone, Aladdin or Google Classroom.
- Staff members should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal email addresses to pupils or parents/carers.
- If a staff member receives a request to connect with a parent/carer on social media, they are strongly advised to respond using the standard response provided in Appendix B.
- Staff members should not interact with any pupil in the school on social media
- Staff members should not interact on social media with any ex-pupil under the age of 18.

## Social Media as part of School Service

We acknowledge that there are many social media platforms which can be of great use to the children's educational and social development and online sites such as GoNoodle, GetEpic etc are currently in use in our school.

All proposals for using social media and social networking sites 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 and Board of Management.

### *Responsibility and accountability*

#### The Principal and Board of Management

- Should ensure that all existing and new staff are trained and become familiar with this policy and its relationship to the school's standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT and e-safety;
- Should provide regular opportunities to discuss appropriate social media use by staff and ensure that any queries raised are resolved swiftly;
- Must ensure that any allegations raised in respect of access to social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Positive Behaviour.

#### School staff

- Should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and its relationship to the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), Anti-Bullying Policy, and Code of Positive Behaviour; as well as the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- Should raise any queries or areas of concern they have relating to the use of social media and interpretation of this policy with the Principal in the first instance; and
- Must comply with this policy where specific activities or conduct is prohibited.

#### The Board of Management

- Will review this policy and its application annually (or more frequently as required).

## *Child Protection Guidance*

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

- Report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person (The Principal)
- The disclosure should be recorded by the Designated Liaison Person 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.

## *Implementation and Review*

This policy has been developed by a working group including: Principal, Deputy Principal, teachers, and Board of Management members.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management, staff and relevant stakeholders.

The school will monitor the impact of the policy using:

- Logs of reported incidents.
- Surveys and/or questionnaires of pupils, parents, and staff.

Should serious online safety incidents take place, the principal Sheila Gaughan or alternatively the deputy principal Aoife Mahon should be informed.

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Ann Ryan, Chairperson  
Board of Management  
Castaheany ETNS

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Date

*Appendix A: Guidance for Registered Teachers About the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication*

This document prepared by the Teaching Council can be accessed at:

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/publications/fitness-to-teach/guidance-for-registered-teachers-about-the-use-of-social-media-and-electronic-communication.pdf>

*Appendix B: Standard response for staff members to respond to requests to connect with parents / carers via social media.*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

In accordance with our Social Media Policy, staff members of Castaheany ETNS are advised not to interact on social media with parents/carers of pupils.

On school-related matters, please contact me by email at the following address:

Alternatively, please phone the school office at (01) 6467484 to arrange a suitable date/time for a meeting.