

Social Media Policy

Introduction

This Social Media Policy was a collaborative school process, involving teachers, staff, parent representatives, the Principal and the Board of Management in February 2023.

Rationale

St John the Baptist IGS also known as Belgrove IGS recognises that teachers, students and parents engage with social media applications. These applications include, but are not limited to, WhatsApp, Youtube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Blogs, and other online tools through which people connect and share information.

All members of the Belgrove IGS' community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all Social Media interactions. Staff, students and parents will not act in such a way that the image of Belgrove IGS is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms members of the school community.

Therefore, it is expected that Belgrove IGS' staff, students and parents use Social Media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social Media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or to misrepresent Belgrove IGS or any member of the school community.

Aims

The aim of the Social Media Policy is to set standards of behaviour for the use of Social Media that are consistent with the values and expectations of Belgrove IGS. Belgrove IGS aims to protect the safety and wellbeing of students, teachers and the school community. If however, there is a breach of the Belgrove IGS' Social Media Policy the school will undertake disciplinary action. Breaches will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to Gardaí where the school is required to do so.

Definitions

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social Media: refers to all social networking sites. These sites include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, KIK, Instagram, SMS, YouTube and includes emails and mobile devices.

Please see appendix 1 for more detailed definitions

Rights and Responsibilities

Staff, students and parents are expected to show respect to all members of the school community.

Staff will: Plan for the inclusion of cyber safety awareness within the curriculum with guidance from relevant education authorities, as appropriate.

Parents will: Be responsible for being aware of and informed about their children's online activity and be proactive in the supervision and guidance of their children, taking into account this policy and in particular the school's core values.

PARENT GUIDELINES

The school requests that parents act responsibly and respectfully at all times, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

When using Social Media, parents are expected to ensure that they:

- Read and agree to the terms and conditions of various Social media sites
- Are aware of what they are posting online and that Social Media sites and applications are public forums.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.

- Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten other members of the school community.
- Do not make defamatory comments towards other members of the school community.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or towards members of the school community.
- Do not harm the reputation of Belgrove IGS or those within it's community.
- Do not upload video, audio or photographs of any member of the Belgrove IGS community (student, parents or staff).
- Do not upload any video or photographs of any student where they can be identified as a Belgrove IGS student by their uniform or any other means.
- Be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions that **DO HAVE** implications for their primary aged children. Parents need to monitor their children's online social media activity and read the terms and conditions of various Social Media sites and applications their children are interested in using. In Ireland, the Digital Age of Consent has been set at **16 years old**. For children under that age, consent must be given by the parent or guardian of the child. Parents need to be aware that many Social Media sites have age restrictions for their use. Eg Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and Gmail are all restricted to those **13 years of age and above**.
- Be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their children to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- Before uploading photos, audio or video, parents need to seek appropriate permission from any individual involved. This particularly applies to the privacy of Belgrove IGS staff.
- Online postings and conversations are not private. Do not share confidential information, internal school discussions, or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- Be conscious of the fact that expert advice given is that all users of Social Media sites should do whatever they can to not identify any child by name or associate them with a particular school.
- Parents should not spread false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information about the Belgrove IGS community and its members.

- Parents assisting with classroom activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.

STAFF AND TEACHER GUIDELINES

Social Media in relation to staff and teacher relates to blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video, instant messaging and mobile devices.

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram must not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.
- Staff are advised to NOT accept ex-students or parents of current students as friends on personal Social Media sites.
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- The school seeks permission from parents to post photographs of students on the school website. However, Staff do not have permission to post details that would identify any child.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online. Staff need to be mindful that what they publish will be public for a long time.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the online world. If staff identify themselves online as affiliated with Belgrove IGS then they need to be aware that they are by definition representing the entire school community. Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school's values and ethos.
- Staff should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information in regards to the Belgrove IGS community and its members.
- When contributing online, staff should not post confidential student information.
- Staff should visit their profile's security and privacy settings on social networking sites. At a minimum, staff should have all privacy settings set to 'only friends'.

MANAGING CHANGE AND ISSUES ARISING

- We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the Belgrove IGS community has a concern or question pertaining to Social Media or Social Networking sites, this should be directed to the Principal.
- Parents, students or staff who have a complaint or issue arise from Social Media should contact the Principal.

Review and Implementation

The Social Media Policy is available on the school's website: www.belgrove.ie

The Social Media Policy was formally approved by the Board of Management at its meeting on 10.03.2023

Paul Nolan

Chairperson

Board of Management

APPENDIX 1

DEFINITIONS

Social Media Social networking sites: are websites that allow you to create a personal profile about yourself and then chat and share information with others such as family and friends eg WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok

Video, audio and photo sharing websites: are sites that allow you to upload and share videos, sounds and photos which can be viewed/heard by web users the world over eg, Flickr, YouTube, iTunes U, Vimeo, SoundCloud

Blog: A blog (short for web log) is a kind of online diary, where you regularly post about your life, your passions, business, news or other interests. It is a way of having your own space in the virtual world eg, WordPress, Blogger

Microblogging apps: are websites that post micro-blog like posts to announce what you are currently doing eg, Twitter, Tumblr

Location-based apps: (also known as *Geolocation*) are applications with the capability to detect and record where you and other people are located

Wikis: are websites where users create, edit and share information about a particular subject or topic eg, Wikipedia, Wikispaces

Online gaming: are games played over some form of computer network and are often based around a community of users eg, Steam

News aggregation: news aggregators provide a list of the latest news stories published by users from a range of different web sites eg, Digg

Ning: an online platform for people and organisations to create custom social networks around specific interests. Ning offers the ability to create an invited closed community website with a customised appearance and feel, feature sets such as forums, blogs, photos, and videos

Forums or message boards: are online discussion sites where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages