



Educate
Together



Social Media Policy for Students at ETSS Wicklow

School Address: The Glebe, Wicklow Town

Roll number: 68345R

School Patron/s: Educate Together

Introduction

The Management and Staff of ETSS Wicklow recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), including the internet, and social media provides our students with enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life. Students are expected to use such technologies and the internet in a safe, ethical and responsible manner and always for educational purposes, both in school and off-campus. Use of digital technologies and internet should be conducted within the parameters of internet safety, acceptable use, student and staff well-being, and educational value. The Social Media Guidelines for ETSS Wicklow have been developed following consultation with staff, parents/guardians, students, senior management and the Board of Management. The policy applies to the use of all digital devices and computers, iPads and mobile phones, all smart devices including smart watches and extends to all such technologies with internet connectivity, camera, video or sound-recording technologies.

The school permits students to use their own “school-approved” devices within the school to assist with their education, subject to their own safety and that of other individuals. iPads are to be used by students for educational purposes only.

Definition

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.

Rationale

Unfortunately, there is scope for irresponsible and inappropriate use of Social Media sites which can lead to bullying, harassment and illegal activity while online. This policy has been developed to offer guidance and direction to all students of ETSS Wicklow on the safe and responsible use of Social Media.

Aims

- Produce a set of strategies for students to use Social Media safely and responsibly.
- Protect the integrity and good name of all members of the school community from online abuse.
- Outline behaviour which is unacceptable and the consequences for engaging in such behaviour.
- Provide guidance for students on the appropriate use of Social Media.
- Outline procedures for school community members who find themselves the victims of inappropriate social media behaviour.

Scope

This policy applies to the students of ETSS Wicklow. 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 devices. This policy will be monitored by the staff. Reviews will be undertaken as deemed necessary.

Social Media Usage Guidelines

- a. Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
- b. Students are expected to be selective about what you share. Everything online happens in front of a vast, invisible, and often anonymous audience. Once something is out there, it does not go away and can be copied and forwarded easily and quickly. Everything leaves a digital footprint. You should never post personal details such as your phone number, email address or home address.
- c. Be selective with friends. Be careful who you make friends with online. In general, it is better to restrict friends to people you know and trust in the real world.
- d. Never post your location or someone else's location – to ensure your safety, be careful about the type and amount of personal information you provide. Avoid talking about personal schedules or situations.

- e. Use strict privacy settings – review all of the options on your privacy settings page. Many sites default settings tend to keep information public until a user makes it private. **'Friends Only'** is a good choice for most items, but you can be even more selective.
- f. If your profile is linked to your mobile phone, you should use the website's privacy settings to ensure that your phone number is not visible.
- g. Chat & VoIP services. (These allow for communication that may be typed or spoken with or without webcam access) – when using the above you should only communicate with people you trust and remember that other people may be able to view all aspects of the communication.
- h. Students are forbidden from taking photos, videos or sound recordings of anyone in the school (including students, staff, parents/guardians and visitors) unless instructed by a teacher to do so as part of a class activity once the consent of the individual(s) involved has been confirmed. Students must not share such material online without the clear permission of a teacher and only for educational or school promotional purposes.
- i. Students should also remember not to post anything online that they wouldn't want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE OR PROFILE ESTABLISHED IN THE COURSE OF SCHOOL BUSINESS

- a. Seek permission, students must seek or have permission from the Principal/Deputy Principal before: (a) setting up a site or profile relating to School business and or School matters; (b) registering in the School's name on social media sites, user groups, special interest forums and bulletin boards; (c) using social media for teaching and learning purposes;
- b. Only official school social media accounts, or social media as instructed by a teacher, may be accessed. Students' personal social media accounts may not be accessed during the school day or using the log-in details ascribed by the school.
- c. Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the school.

REPORTING

- a. Staff and students should immediately report to the Principal/Deputy Principal any inappropriate, abusive, defamatory or unacceptable social media activity concerning the school, its employees, volunteers, students or other members of the school community. Such reports will be fully investigated, the reported activity will be reviewed and, where appropriate, the content will be reported using the relevant online reporting mechanism.
- b. School management will monitor the school's social media platforms.

Communication between pupils/school staff

- a. Communication between pupils and staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- b. Students are not permitted to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If students attempt to do this, the member of staff is to refuse the student access and inform the Principal. The student's parents will be informed if this happens.
- c. ETSS Wicklow has provided an email address for communication between staff and pupils. Personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses are not permitted to be used as forms of communication.
- d. 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 networking sites about others connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might bring the school into disrepute.

Unacceptable use of Social Media sites will include:

- a. Sending or posting discriminatory, defamatory, inappropriate, harassing, negative comments, threatening messages or images that may cause harm to any member of the school community.
- b. Students must not create, publish, download or communicate material/content that could reasonably be regarded as defamatory, inappropriate, discriminatory, offensive, hostile, pornographic, damaging to the School's reputation or referring to a third person without their permission. Uploading, forwarding or linking to the aforementioned content is also unacceptable.
- c. Uploading, forwarding, linking or 'liking' material that is likely to cause offence or hurt to a third party.
- d. Sending or posting messages or material that could damage the school's image or reputation.
- e. Creating a fake profile that impersonates a member of the school community.
- f. Sending or posting material that is confidential to the school.
- g. Uses that violates copyright law, fail to observe licensing agreements or infringe on others intellectual property rights.
- h. Participating in the viewing or exchange of inappropriate images or obscene material.
- i. Plagiarism should be avoided and credit should always be given to the original author.

While all cases involving the inappropriate use of social media will be dealt with on an individual basis, the school and the Board of Management consider the above list of unacceptable uses to be serious breaches of our Code of Behaviour. Disciplinary action will be taken in the case of inappropriate use of social media tools.

Examples of Acceptable Use

- a. Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online as offline.
- b. Treat social media carefully, and alert staff/parents/guardians if there is any problem with how they are being used.
- c. Encourage positive, constructive discussions if allowed to use communicative or collaborative technologies.
- d. Alert a teacher or other staff member of any threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, posts) which appears online.
- e. Be cautious to protect personal safety and the safety of others.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Users should use their own good judgment when using social media.

Sanctions for Policy infringements

Infringements of this policy may have disciplinary repercussions, including, (but not exclusively):

- a. Suspension of network and computer privileges.
- b. Confiscation of devices if found on school grounds or on school related activities.
- c. Notification to parents.
- d. Detention.
- e. Suspension from school and/or school-related activities.
- f. Exclusion in the case of serious misconduct which brings the school into disrepute or defames, slanders or bullies any member of the school community. This especially applies, but not exclusively, to any student who sets up a facility or contributes or allows material to be sourced for the purpose of degrading, bullying or humiliating any member of the school community.
- g. Legal action and/or prosecution.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed every two years and on any other occasions where it is necessary to comply with any relevant legislative changes.