Social Media, Email and School Website Policy

This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to provide guidance regarding the use of social media connected to the school as well as the school website.

Contents

Introduction:

This school policy on social media and the school website was written in consultation with staff and approved by the Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS.

Background:

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS recognises that social media and school websites are powerful tools for communication between staff members, parents and the wider community. The use of social media and the school website are effective methods for expanding community awareness of the activities in our school as well as provide information to prospective parents.   The school currently maintains a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ketns), has a website (www.ketns.ie) and uses Aladdin to send emails and text messages to parents. The school also uses Seesaw and Google Classroom to share homework assignments in some classes and as required for distance learning.

Rationale:

This policy on social media, email and the school website is required for the following reasons:

- To provide protocols for what information, including images of children, will be posted on Facebook or our school website.
- To identify who has access to and is responsible for maintaining these communication tools and what procedures are in place to ensure security is maintained.
- To provide a framework for responding to any postings that target negatively any member of the school community via these communication channels.
- To demarcate the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management and school leaders.
- To list possible actions in the event of an attack on the school website

Relationship to School Ethos:

Knocknacarra ETNS values the holistic education of all children in the school and desires equal access for all children to educational opportunities. This policy will endeavour to ensure good communication between all stakeholders as well as respectful use by these stakeholders of these communication modes.

Aims and Objectives:

- To establish the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management, school leadership and parents regarding social media and the school website.
- To ensure procedures are in place that provide for strong security.
- To provide protocols for ensuring all potentially harmful postings are addressed appropriately.

Policies and Procedures:

Facebook

The school maintains a school Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ketns). Currently two members of the Board, the principal and one other member, act as administrators for the page. Additional administrators may be added with the consent of the Board of Management. This is a public page, and anyone can like and follow it.

Posts are normally only made by the administrators. Posts created by other users are by default hidden unless an administrator approves them. Posts that advertise products or services will not be allowed. Occasionally, posts are promoted, particularly related to open evenings and fundraising events. Posts may be about events in the school as well as Educate Together, the school's patron. The protocols for images to be used are outlined later in this policy.

Comments, reviews and posts are monitored by the administrators. The administrators receive notification of these and will check them as soon as is practical. Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed as offensive. Inappropriate comments will be removed as soon as possible. Users should not engage in giving negative feedback on Facebook or other social media sites as it is more appropriate to deal with the school directly, as outlined in the Complaints Procedure. Users will not mention individual staff members in a negative light. Users can not tag photographs of children in images posted on the page as this option is disabled. The ability of other users to tag the page or the school's user profile is disabled. Users may leave reviews. Users should not add comments that identify specific children by name. The school reserves the right to remove any comments as well as ban users from the school page, if required.

Website
The school website (www.ketns.ie) is maintained by the principal. The website is updated on approximately a weekly basis during term time. It is the main portal for prospective parents to find out more about the school as well as to pre-enrol children. Each newsletter (An Focal Deireanach) is posted online. Other important information on the website include the school calendar and a listing of upcoming events. In time, links for families to use to support their children's education will be added. Currently comments are disabled throughout the website. Security extensions are used to prevent hacking, and the website is monitored on a regular basis to ensure it remains uncompromised. All security patches and updates are regularly applied to the website.

Emails and Texts
Communication with parents via email and text messages, typically using the Aladdin platform, is a common way of sharing newsletters and announcements with parents. On occasion, particularly if assemblies and other gatherings can't be held, pictures and videos may be sent to parents via email. It is understood that these images and videos are not to be shared on social media and only for private viewing among the families of the school. Permission for videos and photos will be sought upon enrolment. Permission for those currently enrolled will be secured using Aladdin Connect.

Seesaw and Google Classroom
Classes used Seesaw and Google Classroom occasionally to share homework assignments and tasks or when the school is engaging in Distance Learning. They are used on a private basis, unlike other forms of social media, with only those with login details able to view, respond and share. See the Distance Learning Policy for more information about these tools.

General Guidelines for Content Regarding Social Media
The school website and its Facebook page:

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages, which includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school policies relating to staff.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any confidential matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents.

No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend'. Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school in personal use of social media sites. Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Images and Video on Social Media and the School Website:

The website and Facebook page, as well as any other potential social media platforms, of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS uses photographs and videos of children according to the following guidelines:

- Informed consent of parents will be obtained before images of children can be posted on the school website or Facebook page. This will be given using a signed form upon the child's enrolment in the school.
- Pictures will not have captions that include any personal information, including names, other than the class name. In circumstances were specific children are being recognised for individual achievements and will be named in a caption, we will seek specific permission from parents on each occasion.
- All images will be groups of children and action photos rather than portraits unless we seek specific permission of parents.
- The size of images will not exceed 1000x1000 pixels.
- Parents will be asked to grant permission for videos to be made and shared within the school community via email. Permission must be granted by a parent/guardian of every child visible in the video. If the videos are being posted on social media or shared with someone outside the school (for example, to enter a competition) parents/guardians will be informed at least 3 days in advance and will have the right request a video not be posted on social media if their child is visible. As with a photograph, a child's name will not be included or mentioned in a video without the express permission of parents. Staff members will naturally ensure that videos and images present the children and the school in a positive light.
- A parent/guardian or child may request to have an image or video removed at any time, even if he or she had granted consent previously. For further details, refer to the school's Data Protection Policy.
- Anyone with concerns about an inappropriate use of any image on the school website or Facebook page should contact the principal.

Parents Using Images of Children or School Events
Parents are welcome to take photographs and videos at school events for personal use only. Images and videos may not be added to any websites or social media platforms without the permission of the principal.

Complaints or Concerns Regarding Posts or Images
In addition to the official administrators of the school website and Facebook page, anyone who has concerns about a post or image should contact the principal. The principal will investigate and immediately act to remove any image, comment or post that is inflammatory, of a bullying nature or contravenes the policies or wishes of parents regarding any images used. If such posts or comments are made by pupils, these will be addressed according to the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. If the concerns relate to something added by an adult, the principal will investigate, including contacting the individual responsible and seeking a quick solution.

Possible Actions in the Event of an Attack / Compromise
In the event where school's website is attacked/compromised, the principal will restore the original website from backup. The event will be logged and, if possible, an investigation will follow on the cause of this event. In case of a conclusive investigation, all prevention mechanisms will be applied. In the event that website access is revoked as a result of attack, the principal will contact the hosting provider for renewed credentials. The server access credentials will always be kept with the principal as well as another member of the Board of Management.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities:

Board of Management
- To support the maintenance of the school website and Facebook page, including any costs related to domain name, hosting and promoting of posts.
- To assist with the monitoring of these communication tools as designated to individual Board members.
- To review this policy regularly to ensure its protocols are being followed.

Principal
- To maintain the school website and update it regularly as the primary administrator, with the assistance of the school secretary as appropriate.
- To update the Facebook page, as required.
- To monitor these communication tools on a regular basis.
- To respond and act appropriately on any concerns related to posts, comments or images.

Class Teachers
- To add posts to the website as an author.
- To ensure children without permission are not photographed for the purposes of posting images on the website or social media.

Parents and Guardians
- To provide or deny permission for images of children to be posted on the school website and social media platforms.
- To use the school website and Facebook page as a source of information about the school.

Children
- To use the school website in an age-appropriate manner and under supervision of an adult. Further information regarding the use of the internet by children at school is described in the forthcoming Acceptable Usage Policy. (Please note: Children under the age of 13 are not allowed to use Facebook. Therefore, this communication tool is intended solely for the adult members of the school community.)

Implementation and Review:
The policy has immediate effect and will be reviewed no later than 2023.

Ratification and Communication:
The policy was ratified by the BoM on the date below. It will be posted on the school website in due course.

Paul Adams, chairperson   Date of ratification: 09/12/2020