'Social Media'

Policy

School Mission Statement

At Glencraig Integrated Primary School we aspire to maximise the skills and talents of our pupils and staff in a respectful, happy and caring environment, enabling them to become fulfilled and responsible citizens.

(While delivering our Mission Statement we recognise and are committed to upholding the rights of the child as outlined in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child.)

Approved by Board of Governors: _____

Review Date: June 2019

Mission statement and aims

At Glencraig Integrated Primary School we aspire to maximise the skills and talents of our pupils and staff in a respectful, happy and caring environment, enabling them to become fulfilled and responsible citizens.

Common to all these policies are the following general **school aims**:-

- Provide and encourage an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual respect for the children from all religious, non-religious, social and cultural backgrounds.

- Create a happy, secure, stimulating environment in which all pupils can learn effectively and become clear, confident communicators.

- Present children with a variety of challenging, activity based learning experiences incorporating all areas of study required by the Northern Ireland Curriculum. (UN Convention, Article 28)

- Encourage children to recognise the value of developing a healthy mind and body and to foster, within each child, a positive self-image.

- Encourage parents to have a constructive and positive role in the school.

- Place the school at the heart of the local community.

Use of ICT allows all pupils to gain confidence and ability in an ever-changing society and prepares them for the challenge of a rapidly developing and evolving technological world.

In Glencraig IPS we aim to :-

- provide opportunities to enable all our staff, pupils and parents to be confident, competent and independent users of ICT.

- provide an environment where access to ICT resources is natural and commonplace.

- ensure ICT has a fundamental role in developing and enhancing our school's key learning aims in promoting the pupils' educational, physical and social needs.

- Use ICT to encourage our staff and pupils to work collaboratively.

Rationale

We recognize that the digital world is changing constantly and that our pupils need to be empowered with the right emotional and decision making skills as well as technical skills to navigate it successfully and safely. This is particularly true of social media. We recognize that people are choosing to communicate with family, friends and strangers through a number of social platforms.

Our school has chosen to communicate using social media platforms and respects the desire of staff members and parents to do so too. We recognize that as a school we have no jurisdiction in policing social media platforms but urge the whole school community to work collaboratively to communicate appropriately. However, we also understand that as a school we have a responsibility to protect individuals within the school community and to act aptly to inappropriate or threatening communication.

This policy outlines the responsibilities that staff and parents have in role modelling effective and safe communication on social media.

Social Networking

Social networking is now part of everyday life. However, there are now just as many new opportunities to get into potential danger as there are to connect with folks all over the world. One thing we often forget while having fun on social networks is that almost anybody can see what we are doing. While we are tagging photos of our friends or are posting comments to them, it can be easy to forget that someone else who has been invited onto a social networking site can also view them. Often there is a minimal amount of control over who ultimately gets to see our post.

Once something appears on the Internet, it's almost impossible to remove. As these sites continue to grow in popularity, so too does the value of the information on them to parties other than those directly involved. Social networking users need to take a step back and think about just what they're posting onto the Internet.

Responsibilities of staff

People who work with children and young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid improper contact or relationships and respect their position of trust.

With regard to relationships, individuals who work with children and young people should not attempt to establish a relationship, which might include:
- communication of a personal nature
- inappropriate dialogue through the internet
- the sending of emails or text messages of an inappropriate nature

Where the primary relationship is not through school, for example a family member or close family friend, we would advise cautious, transparent communication that is inclusive of parents/carers.

Individuals who work with children and young people, should be extremely careful in corresponding with people on social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind.

Staff relationships with children and young people should, at all times, remain professional and they should **not** correspond with children and young people through such sites or add them as 'friends'.

It is worth bearing in mind that, on such sites, an inappropriate or even misconstrued communication may have the potential to impact upon their careers, or even result in criminal investigation.

In addition, staff should bear in mind **who** may access their own profiles on such websites. Staff should therefore take care as to the information they display about themselves, their personal lives and should not make any reference to school or individuals within it. They should also ensure that they have installed, and are using, the highest level of privacy settings.

Individuals who work with children and young people, should not make, view or access, illegal or inappropriate images of children.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking through the implementation of this policy.

Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. It is recommended that pictures taken of pupils within the school setting/at school events should not be posted on social networking sites without parents' permission.

Complaints made in public through social media are detrimental and possibly damaging to the school community and as such are not beneficial to the children.   It would be of benefit to the school that if any parent has a concern or complaint in relation to any school related matter that they voice it through the correct channels, such as speaking to a teacher/principal or following the School Complaints Procedure.

Parents/carers should not post inaccurate, malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community or any school policy, process or procedure. Parents should be aware that any comments which could be defamatory could be subject to legal proceedings.

Action will also be taken if any inappropriate comments are made in which a member of the school community can be identified from the content of the comment.   Where appropriate, comments will be reported to the PSNI.

The school Twitter account is primarily intended to be a means of communication to inform parents and share the school successes. As above it would be of benefit to the school that if any parent has a concern or complaint in relation to any school related matter that they voice it through the correct channels, such as speaking to a teacher/principal or following the School Complaints Procedure. If threatening or inappropriate comments are made individuals will be reported and blocked from the account.

Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen.
http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage
(UN Convention, Article 17)