Knockavoe School and Resource Centre

Social Media Policy

January 2025

Principal:	Sharon Canady	**Date:**	3/4/25.
Chair of Governors:	June Neill	**Date:**	3/4/25

Introduction

This policy describes Knockavoe School's approach to the management of social media and its role in sharing success at Knockavoe School and as a means of communicating with parents/guardians.

Principle

To ensure that Knockavoe School is a positive and safe learning environment for pupils, staff and visitors, it is essential that the use of social media platforms is closely monitored with clear boundaries in place, in order to ensure the safety of our pupils and the professionalism of all staff.

As a Rights Respecting School, we prioritise the Articles within the UNCRC to ensure that all pupils feel safe when they come to school through our consistent approach to communication via social media and the stringent online safety measures which we have in place in relation to the use of social media platforms as a means of promoting Knockavoe School. Our core values (see below) underpin all that we do and will inform all decision making in relation to the implementation of this social media policy.

Article 3: 'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all things that affect children.' UNCRC.

Article 28: 'Every child has the right to an education.' UNCRC

Article 13: 'Every child has the right to express themselves.' UNCRC

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, staff and parents/guardians at Knockavoe School.

Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of Knockavoe School community when using social media platforms
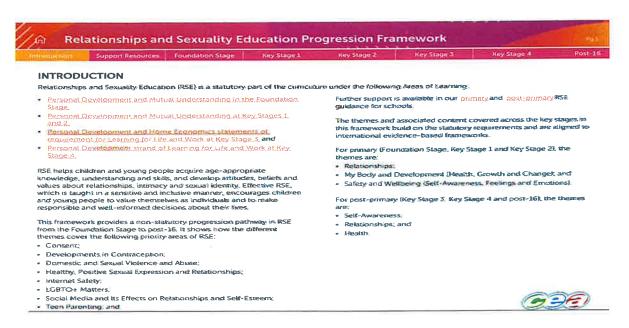
To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, visitors and volunteers at Knockavoe School in relation to the use of social media

To provide a safe environment for pupils, staff, parents, Board of Governors and all other visitors to the school. This can only be achieved and maintained with close cooperation and active participation from all staff with clear guidance and protocols put in place.

To ensure that Knockavoe School complies with online safety regulations and EA advice regarding the use of social media platforms by schools.

Curriculum

For our children, online safety is taught discretely as part of the Preventative Curriculum. The need to maintain the privacy of your identity and permission to share any personal details is emphasised to our pupils on a regular basis. Internet safety and social media and its effects on relationships and self-esteem is taught through PDMU lessons (Foundation Stage & KS1/KS2) and through the personal development strand of Learning for Life and Work (KS3/KS4) at Knockavoe school. The Relationships and Sexuality Education Progression Framework is closely followed by all teachers to ensure progression across the key stages.

Relationships and Sexuality Education Progression Framework

| Introduction | Support Resources | Foundation Stage | Key Stage 1 | Key Stage 2 | Key Stage 3 | Key Stage 4 | Post-16 |

INTRODUCTION

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory part of the curriculum under the following Areas of Learning:

- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding in the Foundation Stage,
- Personal Development and Mutual Understanding at Key Stages 1 and 2,
- Personal Development and Home Economics statements of requirement for Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 3; and
- Personal Development strand of Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4.

RSE helps children and young people acquire age-appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop attitudes, beliefs and values about relationships, intimacy and sexual identity. Effective RSE, which is taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, encourages children and young people to value themselves as individuals and to make responsible and well-informed decisions about their lives.

This framework provides a non-statutory progression pathway in RSE from the Foundation Stage to post-16. It shows how the different themes cover the following priority areas of RSE:

- Consent;
- Developments in Contraception;
- Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse;
- Healthy, Positive Sexual Expression and Relationships;
- Internet Safety;
- LGBTQ+ Matters;
- Social Media and Its Effects on Relationships and Self-Esteem;
- Teen Parenting; and

Further support is available in our primary and post-primary RSE guidance for schools.

The themes and associated content covered across the key stages in this framework build on the statutory requirements and are aligned to international evidence-based frameworks.

For primary (Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2), the themes are:

- Relationships;
- My Body and Development (Health, Growth and Change); and
- Safety and Wellbeing (Self-Awareness, Feelings and Emotions).

For post-primary (Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and post-16), the themes are:

- Self-Awareness;
- Relationships; and
- Health.

Definition of Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines *"social media"* as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook or Instagram
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
- Micro-blogging applications, such as X (formerly Twitter)

General social media expectations

- Knockavoe School believes everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity, both offline and indeed online. The same standards of behaviour are expected online and all members of the Knockavoe School community are expected to engage in social media in a responsible, professional and positive manner.
- All members of the Knockavoe School community are advised not to post or share content which may be considered threatening, defamatory or inappropriate on any social media platform or when communicating generally online.
- Staff and pupil access to social media while using school devices will not be permitted.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of Knockavoe School community will be taken seriously. Any potential concerns will be managed in accordance with the appropriate policies, including the anti-bullying, child protection and behaviour policies.

Staff use of social media

- The use of social media during school hours for personal use is not permitted by staff (except for during the break/lunch of a staff member)
- Staff will not use any personal social media accounts to contact or respond to messages from children or their families.
- Information and content which staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photographs and personal information about pupils and

their family members or colleagues, will not be shared or discussed on social media platforms.

- All staff are expected to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance with our policies and the wider professional reputation and legal framework. All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including texts and images, which they share on social media.

- The safe and responsible use of social media sites will be discussed with all staff members as part of the staff induction process. Advice will be provided and updated via staff training and additional guidance/resources will be shared with staff as and when required.
- Any complaint about staff misuse of social media or policy breaches will be taken seriously in line with our child protection and code of conduct policies.

Official use of social media

- Knockavoe school uses the following official online platforms; the school website and the school Facebook account.
- The official use of social media sites by Knockavoe School leadership team only takes place with clear educational, sharing pupil success or community engagement objectives.
- Official social media platforms are suitably protected and restrictive measures are implemented by school leadership team members as deemed appropriate
- Official social media platforms have been set up as distinct and dedicated accounts for official school use only.
- Only the school leadership team have access to the school Facebook page, while the School Social Media Team and all teaching staff also have full access to the school website.
- Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including (but not limited to), anti-bullying, data protection and child protection.
- Only pupils who have written parental permission will have their photographs displayed on the school Facebook page/school website
- The 'comment' facility on the school Facebook page will be very closely monitored by the school leadership team and this facility to comment beneath school posts will be removed where it is deemed necessary

Pupil use of social media

- The use of social media during school hours for personal use is not permitted for pupils
- Many online behaviour incidents amongst children and young people occur on social media outside the school day and beyond the boundaries of school. Parents/carers are therefore responsible for this behaviour.
- However, where online behaviour poses a threat or causes harm to another child, this could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school when the child is identifiable as a member of the school, therefore action will be taken in line with our behaviour and child protection policies.
- Knockavoe School will empower our children to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful manner and develop their resilience so they can manage and respond, with support, to online risks.
- Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupils as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding educational approach using age-appropriate sites and resources.
- Pupils will be advised:
  - To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details or information on social media sites which could expose their identity
  - To only approve and invite known friends on social media platforms and to deny access to others by ensuring their profile is 'private'
  - Not to meet any online friends without the permission of a parent/carer and to only do so when a trusted adult is also present
  - To use safe passwords
  - To use social media platforms which are appropriate for their age and ability
  - How to block and report unwanted communications
  - How to report concerns on social media, both within the setting and externally
- Any concerns regarding pupil use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate existing school policies
- Concerns regarding pupil's use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media

Link with other policies

This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans, including, but not limited to:
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection

Responding to policy breaches

- All members of the Knockavoe School community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing school policies and procedures.
- All members of our school community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.
- Pupils, parents and staff will be informed of our complaints procedure.

Policy monitoring & review

- Modern technology evolves at a rapid pace. Knockavoe School will review this policy annually. It will be reviewed by the Principal, Senior Leadership Team and the School Social Media Team and shared with staff and all other relevant stakeholders.
- The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates or advice from our local Education Authority.
- We will closely monitor internet use taking place via our school devices and systems and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is consistently applied
- All members of our school community will be made aware of how the school will monitor policy compliance: for example, through staff training, classroom management and vigilant monitoring.