



St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School

Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

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Statement of Intent

St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School, understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as by damaging the school's reputation. This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp.

Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 1998 Defamation Act 2013
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (as amended)
- E-safety and social media conduct

2.1. St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School expects parents to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following behaviour online:

Posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents, pupils, the school or its employees, Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media

2.2. The school has a Complaints Policy in place, to avoid parents broadcasting grievances online.

2.3. Parents will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking and their conduct online.

2.4. Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution.

2.5. Parents will not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media.

2.6. Parents are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

2.7. St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School retains the right to request any damaging material to be removed from social media websites.

Online messaging

3.1. St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School expects parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the school, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents or the school
- sending abusive messages to members of staff.

3.2. The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging online; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit the school community by keeping the school community closer.

3.3. Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing.

3.4. St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.

3.5. The school's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the Board of Governors or PTFA cause any discrepancies through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

3.6. The principal can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

3.7. The principal can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

Monitoring and review

4.1. The principal will review this code of conduct on an annual basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents.

4.2. All parents will be required to read this code of conduct and sign the agreement form should any changes be made.

St. Ronan's Primary and Nursery School

Parent Declaration Form

I _____ (name), parent of _____ (name of child), declare that I have received, read and understand the terms and conditions of this code of conduct.

I understand my obligations under this code of conduct and agree to comply fully with them whilst my child is a pupil at St Ronan's Primary School.

The school will **not tolerate** any of the following:

- Sending abusive messages to parents or teachers
- Sending abusive messages about parents and teachers
- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about other parents, pupils, teachers or the school
- Using social media to complain or post any grievances about the school's values and methods

Signed: _____

Date: _____

St. Ronan's Primary and Nursery School

Dear Parent/Guardian,

At St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School, we aim to promote a positive working partnership with parents at all times; we are highly committed to working constructively and collaboratively with parents in order that the very best outcomes for our children are realised. From time to time, however, issues can arise where the views of some parents and the school views are apparently at odds with one another. When such issues do arise, we strive to reach conciliation and agreement with parents where at all possible by engaging in open, honest and positive dialogue. We feel this is best achieved through meeting and talking with parents face to face.

In the digital age we live in, the use of social media by parents to post negative and defamatory statements about schools and school staff has become a national issue. The vast majority of schools therefore include guidance on the misuse of social media.

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Principals, school staff, and in some cases parents/pupils. We at St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School, consider the use of social media websites being used in this way as unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Principal or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated at St Ronan's Primary and Nursery School, is found posting defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

As a school, we are firmly committed to teaching our children to use the internet safely and responsibly; for their own personal protection this is of paramount importance. We therefore expect that parents will do likewise and will model appropriate use of the internet at home.

We look forward to your co-operation in this respect. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please contact the office to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

Brian McGrath

Principal

Anne Hoogerboord

Chair, Board of Governors