

## **POLICY FOR PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING BY STAFF AND STUDENTS**

This policy adheres to and should be applied with due consideration to the College's commitment to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education.

### **Mission Statement**

Our mission inspired by the Christian tradition is to be a community based on faith, hope and love; developing each individual intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to achieve their full potential.

To achieve this we will:

- Provide a welcoming, supportive community where everyone is valued.
- Provide a high quality, meaningful education which encourages the development of the whole person, inspired by the Notre Dame tradition.
- Promote a caring environment, rooted in the virtues of service, kindness, gratitude and respect.
- Work together for the benefit of each person as well as the wider community.
- Recognise, celebrate and treasure, without exception, the unique gifts and dignity of each person, ensuring equality and fairness for all, as found in the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

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|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Author                             | Deputy Principal |
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| Approved by Audit Committee        | February 2023    |
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## **Introduction**

This policy sets out the principles which Notre Dame College staff and students are expected to follow when using the Internet and social networking sites. The Internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances, however, the principles set out below should always be followed.

The Internet provides a number of social networking opportunities which Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College staff and students may wish to use, including Facebook, and other personal websites, blogs and Twitter accounts.

However, when someone clearly identifies their association with Notre Dame College and / or discusses their work, they are expected to behave appropriately when on the Internet, and in ways that are consistent with the College's ethos and policies.

The intention of this note is not to stop Notre Dame College staff and students from conducting legitimate activities on the Internet and social networking sites, but serves to flag-up those areas in which conflicts can arise.

## **Principles**

Staff and students who identify themselves as part of Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College:

- Must not engage in activities on the Internet which might bring the College into disrepute.
- Must act in a transparent manner when altering online sources of information.
- Must not use the Internet in any way to attack or abuse students, colleagues, teachers or other staff.
- Must not post derogatory comments, or comments of an offensive nature, on the Internet.

Staff should also refer to the Personal Use of Computers by Staff Acceptable Use Policy and the DCSF document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People', available on the staff intranet.

## **Social Networking sites**

The College network must not be used to access social networking sites (these are blocked by the firewall) except as detailed below.

Teaching departments may, however, set up Twitter accounts for educational use under the following conditions:

### *Twitter - Conditions of use by Departments:*

1. The tweets sent out must be strictly research-oriented (links to articles etc). In other words, you must not send out any 'personal' tweets
2. You must make it clear that it is strictly a twitter 'feed' to be followed and that students are not to message you directly at any time (the College email system is the place for that, obviously). You should make it clear that you will not be responding to any messages that come through.
3. Make it clear to students that if they misuse the resource in any way you will block access to them (this is a feature of twitter which can be quite useful).
4. Please provide the IT Services & Network Manager with the log in details to the twitter account so that complete transparency is provided by way of reassurance for all

concerned. In other words, the twitter account will be accessible to College managers in the same way that your email account is.

Additionally for the College twitter account (@NDCSFC):

- Tweets are for information only
- No students/individuals will be “followed”
- No “re-tweets” (except from college department twitter feeds)
- No @USERNAME to be included in tweets
- All tweets mentioning @NDCSFC will be monitored
- Students using inappropriate @USERNAME or language when mentioning @NDCSFC will be blocked and disciplinary procedures may be followed (see below)

All Notre Dame College staff and students should be mindful of the information they disclose on social networking sites. Through the open nature of such sites, it is also possible for third parties to collate vast amounts of information. Where staff and students associate themselves with the College (through providing work details or joining a Notre Dame College network) they should act in a manner which does not bring Notre Dame College into disrepute.

Great care must be taken if staff or students use social networking sites such as Facebook. In particular:

- You must **not** enter these sites from College computers.
- If you use these sites outside College, you should set your security levels so that you have strict control over who can view your profile and any comments or images.
- Staff must not have current students of the College as “friends”, nor should staff agree to be the “friend” of any student.
- Students must not have current members of staff of the College as “friends”, nor should students agree to be the “friend” of any member of staff.
- Be aware that, even if your own page is secure, it is possible that your “friends” could post images or comments about you that are visible to others.
- Staff should also refer to the DCSF document ‘Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People’, available on the staff intranet.

There have been several cases recently where students or their parents or even potential employers have discovered inappropriate images or comments about individuals, with potentially serious consequences.

### **Consideration towards other staff and students**

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share work-related information in this way.

For example, there may be an expectation that photographs taken at a private College event will not appear publicly on the Internet.

Staff and students should consider carefully before posting information, including photographs, and these must be removed immediately if requested.

Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about Notre Dame Catholic Sixth Form College or members of the Notre Dame College community on the Internet. This may amount to cyber-bullying and could be deemed a disciplinary offence.

**Disciplinary action**

If a member of staff or student is found to be engaging in any form of online activity that is deemed as cyber bullying or harrassment, bringing the College's reputation into disrepute and / or uses the Internet in any way to attack or abuse students, colleagues, teachers or other staff they may face disciplinary action.

For students the Achievement Tutor will be contacted to discuss the matter with the student(s) directly. Parents / guardians will also be informed of the misconduct. Disciplinary action may lead to exclusion depending on the nature of the misconduct.