Social Media Guidance Scottish Borders Schools

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Social Media Guidance for Schools

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,LinkedIn, YouTube, school website is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft have social media elements to them.

SBC Education recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This guidance aims to summarise the SBC Social Media Policy for staff, parents, carers and children.

Scope

This guidance is subject to the SBC Social Media Policy, GTCs Code of Conduct, SBC Acceptable Use agreements, SBC Information Security Policy

This guidance:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent Scottish Borders Council
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to schools

Scottish Borders Council respects privacy and understands that staff and students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this guidance.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this guidance.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on, the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this guidance.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this guidance.

Digital communications with students are also considered. *Staff have no need to use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes as there are other platforms available such as Glow Outlook and Teams. If staff choose to use social media with students then they must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.*

Facebook/Twitter/Instagram

Any school looking to create a Facebook/Instagram account for their school should do this through the council Communications team. This 'Social Media Account Request' template can be found on the council intranet – http://intranet.scotborders.gov.uk/IntranetContent/Social media request form.doc

This completed pro forma should be submitted to the school's nominated senior manager for initial approval and then be forwarded to the Council's Communications Team for final approval. communications@scotborders.gov.uk.

Schools can create their own Twitter accounts though there should be a minimum of two administrators one of whom should be a senior leader and content should be moderated being posted online. This is for any Twitter accounts associated with the school.

School Websites

Schools should follow the same guidance for their websites. Including:

- Know your audience. A school website is for sharing the very best of your school and putting it on display. It should tell the story of what your school is about
- It is a place to host key information and policies for future parents/visitors
- There must be at least 2 administrators of the website
- Key public documents such as the school handbook and School Improvement Reports should be hosted on the website
- SLT should monitor the use of the website and the content

Benefits for schools

Many school have social media profiles and use it as a way to celebrate their achievements and to promote all the great work that often goes on in schools to a much wider audience.

If your students have made a fantastic art project, for example, sharing it on social media can be a way to encourage them. Seeing other people reacting positively to their work can be rewarding. It can also be a useful tool to communicate with parents/carers who may be otherwise hard to reach.

Benefits as individuals

For teachers, the likes of LinkedIn and Twitter are great platforms for teachers to network with other like-minded professionals, share ideas or look for advice. It is one of the best professional learning resources you can access as a teacher. Please make sure that any personal account is not linked to an official school account and make constructive decisions about which individuals a school chooses to follow

How do I share students work safely?

Context is everything. If students produce amazing work and you want to share it on social media or the school website, you need to consider factors like their age and whether you have appropriate parental consent, especially if you intend to share an image of the student. You can find more details about specific video/media permissions in a student's Seemis record or enrolment form.

- Look to have a larger group of students in the picture, from a distance
- Do not use a student's names in any social media posts
- In a specific situation where there is close up of a single student and you are not sure, contact the parent to check.

Ultimately, it's about thinking about the subject and the audience you are sharing the images with. Think about how much information you need to share to get your message across without sharing many personal details

Remember that any images shared online are difficult to remove.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

- SLT
  - o Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media/website use.
  - o Implementing the SBC Social Media policy
  - o Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
  - o Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and council services as required. Including informing the InfoTeam@scotborders.gov.uk if there has been a data breach.
  - o Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
  - o Approve account creation

- Administrator/Moderator
  - Populate the Facebook Instagram account following SLT approval and approval from Comms team
  - Store account details, including passwords securely and share admin users with Comms team
  - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
  - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)
- Staff
  - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
  - Attending appropriate training
  - Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school/academy accounts
  - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school/academy

Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a "Friends of the school" Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the school Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this guidance and SBC Social Media Policy. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents. Head Teachers should then complete the form for SBC Comms team.

Monitoring

School accounts must be monitored regularly. Regular monitoring and intervention by the school is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school/academy social media account.

Behaviour

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this guidance and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this guidance. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of SBC
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must inform the head teacher, who will then contact the central comms team for guidance. Staff should not engage directly with any media queries
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school/council and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate. This may result in action being taken under the Council's Disciplinary Procedures for Misconduct.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school and council policies.
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy.
- Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. This may result in action being taken under the Council's Disciplinary Procedures for Misconduct.

- Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to a QIO, police and other relevant external agencies. /Action may also be taken under the Council's Disciplinary Procedures for Misconduct.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. Comments can be deleted from posts if needed.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, the admin should first respond by reminding the user about acceptable use of the social media channel and send a link to the social media policy They should also make sure the user is aware that if they continue, they may be blocked from the page. If the user continues to spam or comment abusive things then they can be blocked from the page
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this must be reported to a senior manager

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images

School use of images can be assumed acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the SBC enrolments conditions. Staff must ensure the relevant permission has been granted in Seemis. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.
- Photos must only be taken on a council owned device, such as an Inspire iPad or camera ,not a personal one
- Photos should be stored either in Glow One Drive, an SBC G:\ drive folder or an I:\ shared network drive. Photos should not be stored on the C:\ of a council device or on a personal device.
- All photos should be removed at the end of that academic year

Pupil Glow Passwords

Information about Glow or curricular log in details for any pupils or member of staff must not be shared on any social media platform nor should they be e-mailed home to parents. Glow is a protected environment for children and young people and giving Glow access to a parent, potentially gives them access to any child in Scotland. This would dealt with as a security breach.

[Password guidance – Glow Connect](#)

Personal use

- Staff
  - Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school or council, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this guidance.
  - Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this guidance. However, they may be investigated if they have a potential negative effect on the reputation of the school or the Council.
  - Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and is considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
  - Staff should not endorse any business or commercial interest on a school account

- Students
  - Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior students of the school on any personal social media network account.
  - The school's education programme should enable the students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
  - Students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy
  - Students who use an official school account must not post inappropriate comments nor make adverse comments about Scottish Borders Council

- Parents/Carers
  - If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
  - The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.

o Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.
- The school should not actively respond to social media comments made by others

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post. Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing your own views on personal channels
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion

- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts
- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Acknowledgements

With thanks to South West Learning Grid for allowing the use of their template in the creation of this policy.

Social Media request form – http://intranet.scotborders.gov.uk/IntranetContent/Social media request form.doc

SBC Social media Policy http://intranet.scotborders.gov.uk/IntranetContent/Social Media Policy 2019.pdf

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/3746/social_media_policy