



Introduction

The Board of Management of Boolavogue N.S. is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking and media sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications and media sites bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly, for educational purposes. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation and the safety of our pupils and staff. This policy and associated guidance was drafted in consultation with the staff, parents and pupils to protect staff and pupils and to advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard the children in our care each day. The policy requirements in this document aim to create a balanced approach to support innovation in learning whilst providing a framework of good practice. Boolavogue N.S. recognises that access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) gives our students enhanced opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for many aspects of life. This Social Media Acceptable Use Policy outlines the guidelines and behaviours that our students are expected to follow when using school technologies for school activities of any nature.

1.0 Social Media

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To encourage safe and responsible use of social media, as appropriate, within the school.
- To ensure that the school is not exposed to legal risks.
- To ensure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected.
- To ensure that our users are able to clearly distinguish whether information provided via social media applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Most social media sites are targeted at older teenagers and adults and to reflect this, they have age restrictive registration policies. However, in reality, it is still possible for children under the age of thirteen to register using false information. Being mindful of this, as parents, guardians and educators, we need to be vigilant of the children's use of social media and educate them about the importance of safety online.

1.2 Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all pupils and staff in our school. The requirements of this policy apply to all aspects of social media which are used for any school related purpose or issues pertaining to Boolavogue N.S., regardless of whether the persons involved are contributing in an official capacity to social media applications provided by external organisations or otherwise. Social media applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs, e.g. Blogger, Twitter
- Online discussion forums, e.g. netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces e.g. Facebook
- Media sharing services e.g. YouTube

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation etc.

1.3 Use of Social Media during school-time

Use of social media during school time for personal use is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Principal or a staff member is on a sanctioned break.

The use of our Twitter page @Boolavogue_NS during school is encouraged.

1.4 Social Networking as part of School Service

We acknowledge that there are many sites which can be of great use to the children's educational and social development and sites such as Youtube, Twitter, GoNoodle etc. are currently in use in our school. When using these sites, school representatives must always operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

Our Twitter page (@Boolavogue_NS) and Facebook page (Boolavogue NS):

- Are seen as a valuable communication resource which shares positive news and information from our school.
- Are valuable tool for collaboration with other schools and organisations and one which can effectively build community.
- Are **private** and only followers approved by the administrator will be able to view our page.
- Shouldn't identify children by their full name.
- Will be updated by teachers, but on certain occasions, a child, under the supervision of a teacher may be invited to provide an update. This could be particularly rewarding for SEN children

We ask that all members of the school community adhere to the same guidelines as set out below when interacting with the school account.

1.5 Terms of Use

Members of the school community must adhere to the following Terms of Use.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. We at Boolavogue N.S. expect that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use:

1.5.1 Social Media/Networking applications:

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes, but is not limited to, material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Must not breach the school's policies, including our code of behaviour which we expect children to follow and adults to model.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise anything relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Principal.

1.5.2 Guidance/protection for staff on the use of social media:

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18
- No member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's page on social networking sites. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' page, e.g. by accepting or requesting them as a friend.

1.5.3 Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking:

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school day.
- In line with the school's mobile phone policy, no pupil is permitted to have a mobile/smart phone in school.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's page on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Principal who in turn will inform the child's parents.
- No school devices are to be used to access personal social networking sites at any time during the school day.

- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment.
- Any improper contact or cyber bullying of any kind should be reported to the class teacher / principal as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying.
- No pupil may upload content to Youtube, Vimeo, Snapchat or alternative sites, relating to themselves and /or other pupils while on school grounds, school trips, and/or in school uniform.
- No pupil may upload content to Youtube, Vimeo, Snapchat or alternative sites, relating to any staff member or to any physical aspect of the school grounds. i.e. photo of the school, **at any time.**

1.5.4 Netiquette

- Netiquette is defined as “appropriate social behaviour on computer networks, in particular, in the online environment”.
- To this end:*
- Students should always use the Internet, network resources, and online sites in a courteous and respectful manner.
 - Students should also recognise that, alongside the valuable content online, there is also unverified, incorrect, or inappropriate content.
 - Students should not post anything online that they wouldn’t want parents, teachers, or future colleges or employers to see.
 - Failure to abide by these rules will result in the removal of use of any ICT devices and parents will be notified immediately. ICT privileges will be restored when the principal and / or teacher deem a child has regained their trust with regard to social media and ICT usage.
 - Boolavogue N.S. can take no responsibility for how parents or guardians police ICT and internet use outside of school hours but would request that parents be vigilant in their children’s internet and ICT usage away from school.
 - Incidents of a serious nature that directly affect or implicate Boolavogue N.S. will follow the same consequences as the schools’ Code of Behaviour policy regardless of whether the incidents take place in school or outside of school.

1.6 Child protection guidance

If any member of staff receives a disclosure that an individual/pupil is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner that directly effects children, they should:

- Report the disclosure to the Designated Liaison Person / Deputy Designated Liaison Person
- The disclosure should be recorded by the DLP / DDLP in line with the child protection policy, and Tusla should be contacted for guidance.
- Procedure as advised by Tusla will be followed, and the necessary authorities contacted.

1.7 Cyber Bullying

- By adopting this policy regarding the use of social media sites on school premises, Boolavogue N.S. protects itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.
- Parents should be clearly aware of the school’s policy of access to social networking sites.

- Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school*.
- Once a disclosure is made, investigations will have to involve all parties involved and their families. This should be dealt with in accordance with our school's anti-bullying policy.
- If parent(s) / guardian(s) refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the gardaí as harassment

*While incidents occurring outside of school is not our responsibility as such, we will endeavour to assist in brokering a solution between parties involved. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

1.7 Technologies Covered

Boolavogue N.S. may provide students with internet access via laptop or tablet devices. These devices may have video-conferencing capabilities, access to virtual learning environments, online collaboration capabilities, online discussion forums, blogs and more.

The policies outlined in this document are intended to cover all online technologies used in the school, not just those specifically mentioned.

1.8 Boolavogue N.S. Mobile Devices

Boolavogue N.S. may provide students with mobile computers, chromebooks, iPads or other devices to promote learning inside the school. Students should abide by the same expected use policies, when using devices for school purposes outside of school as they would within the school grounds. Eg: Fieldtrips, matches, tours etc.

Students are expected to treat these devices with respect. They should report any loss, damage, or malfunction of devices to their teacher immediately. Use of school-issued mobile devices will be monitored within school.

1.9 Mobile devices in the possession of Boolavogue N.S. students

Students may not use personally owned devices in school (e.g. laptops, tablets-computers, digital-cameras and smart-phones) for any purpose. This is reiterated in the school's mobile phone policy.

1.10 Boolavogue N.S. security

We ask that our students remain vigilant when using the internet within school and that they report anything that may cause them alarm to teachers immediately. They must not click on anything they feel is not appropriate to view. If they believe a computer or mobile device they are using might be infected with a virus, they must alert their teacher.

1.11 Personal Safety

- If students see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that makes them concerned for their personal safety, they must bring it to the immediate attention of
 - a teacher if they are at school
 - a parent / guardian if they are at home
- Students should never share personal information about themselves or others, including phone numbers, addresses, PPS numbers, birth-dates, images of themselves or video content of themselves over the Internet without adult permission and supervision.
- Students should never agree to meet someone they meet online in real life without parental permission and supervision.

1.12 Cyber Bullying

While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013, states:

‘placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.’

Harassing, humiliating, denigrating, derogatory, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding and cyber-stalking are all examples of cyber-bullying. Such bullying will not be tolerated in Boolavogue N.S. and will be dealt with in line with the schools’ Anti-Bullying policy.

1.12.1 Cyber bullying Advice

- Students must not send messages or post comments or photographs with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else. Engaging in any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges.
- In some cases, cyber-bullying is a crime.
- The school will support students, teachers and parents in dealing with cyber-bullying.

Boolavogue N.S. is committed to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (Circular 0081/2017) and Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017. The school will act as required by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, the Department of Justice and Equality and the Health Service Executive.

1.3 Violations of this Social Media Acceptable Use Policy

Violations of this policy in Boolavogue N.S. will have disciplinary repercussions, in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying policies. Repeated misdemeanours will result in the suspension of computer privileges and, in cases which are deemed serious enough by the Board of Management, temporary suspension or permanent expulsion from Boolavogue N.S.

1.4 Success Criteria

- Ensure a safe environment for all our children.
- Increase awareness among the children, staff and relevant school stakeholders i.e. parents, about appropriate use of social media and respect each other’s privacy.

Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis due to constantly changing landscape of social media and the internet.

We aim to review this plan every 12 months with the first review taking place in February 2022. It will be reviewed sooner if deemed necessary.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible on the school website at www.boolavoguens.ie or in paper format at parental request. A copy of this policy will also be made available to the Inspectorate and the Patron if requested.

Implementation

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M on _____ and made available to all staff and parents. It will be implemented immediately.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson B.O.M)

_____ (Principal)

Date: _____

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE USE

I will:

- Use school equipment for school-related activities only.
- Follow the same guidelines for respectful, responsible behaviour online that I am expected to follow offline.
- Treat school resources carefully, and alert teachers if there is any problem with their use.
- Encourage positive, constructive discussion if allowed to use a blog or represent the school online.
- Alert a teacher if I see threatening/bullying, inappropriate, or harmful content (images, messages, postings) online.
- Use school technologies at appropriate times, in approved places, for learning/educational reasons.
- Recognise that use of school technologies is a privilege and treat it as such.
- Be cautious to protect the safety of myself and others.
- Help to protect the security of school resources.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE USE

I will not:

- Use school technologies in a way that could be personally or physically harmful to myself or others.
- Search inappropriate images or content.
- Engage in cyber-bullying, harassment, or disrespectful conduct toward others.
- Attempt to find ways to change the school's safety measures and filtering tools.
- Use school technologies to send spam or chain mail.
- Plagiarise content (copy, use as their own, without citing the original creator) I find online.
- Post personally-identifying information, about myself or others or agree to meet someone I meet online in real life.
- Use language online that would be unacceptable in the classroom.
- Use school technologies for illegal activities or to pursue information on such activities.
- Attempt to access sites, servers, accounts, or content that isn't intended for my use.
- This is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Students should use their own good judgment when using school technologies.