St. Conleth’s NS Facebook Policy 2016

**Rationale** This policy has been developed to offer guidance and direction to all members of the school community on the safe and responsible use of our Facebook page. This is also a reference document for victims of inappropriate or unsolicited comments online. Initially this policy relates specifically to Facebook. The policy will be expanded to include other social media as the need arises.

**Relation to Mission Statement** This policy has been developed in line with the school’s mission statement which advocates a safe and caring learning environment for students and staff. As the school embraces new technologies of the digital age there is an increasing need to raise awareness around respect for the individual and the safety of those engaging with these communication tools.

**Scope** This policy applies to the entire school community – management, teachers, other staff, pupils and parents/guardians. Due to the diverse nature of access to Social Media it relates to all such interactions both during and outside of normal school hours and includes the use of school and personal devices

***The purpose having of a school Facebook page is to provide;***

* Communication with parents regarding specific events & activities
* Communication with new or prospective parents
* Communication with wider audience regarding positive advertisement of school & enrolment dates
* Communication with wider audience of school life via possible communication tours -photos of pupil’s projects, notice boards, etc.
* Communication between parents especially new parents
* Continued advancement of our school communication system with information shared via paper notes, email, website & now Facebook

***On communicating with the school Facebook page, users will be automatically required to abide by the St. Conleth’s NS Facebook Policy.***

***Failure to abide by the following rules will result in automatic removal from our Facebook Page without appeal.***

***Those using our social networking site must abide by the following;***

* **Users cannot advertise** products or services on our school Facebook page.
* **Users should not post anything negative on the page**. Negative posts are those which could be deemed as offensive, inappropriate or harmful comments/content. Such posts will be removed immediately. The administrators reserve the right to deem a comment or post as ‘negative’
* **Users should not ask to become “friends” with staff** as failure to respond may cause offence.
* **Users cannot tag anybody in photos of children or post other photographs of children on the page**
* Users should not add comments that can identify children beyond the use of a first name.
* **To use Facebook, one must be 13 years of age or older**. Therefore current pupils cannot be accepted as users. Any pupil that comments on, likes or sends a ‘friend’ request will be given a set period of time to remove the post before they are reported to Facebook.
* As a point of principle students that reach the age of thirteen are similarly banned from posting, liking or sending a ‘friend’ request until they have left the school at the end of sixth class.

**Remember: The sanction for breaking these rules is automatic removal from our Facebook page.**

**For staff and administrators:**

* Staff members are advised to maintain professionalism by not befriending members of the wider school community through Facebook connections. On occasion however this might be appropriate if the relationship pertains to the staff member’s personal life beyond the scope of school community. In this case it may only be as a result of a request by a staff member.
* Posts must always be either informative, positive, or contributing to the overall ethos and mission statement of our school.
* Photos of large groups of children are permitted. If the photo contains more than five children it is deemed to be a large group for the purposes of this policy. In general, **no children should be identified by name in a post which includes their photo**. This will of course be in accordance with the School Acceptable Use Policy.
* On occasion photos and names of children on their own may be posted to highlight exceptional achievement. However this may only be carried out with the permission of at least one Parent/Guardian. Oral permission will suffice. Even if permission is granted to post a photo of an individual child on the page the child’s first name only may be used in the same post.