

**Rationale:**

Maintaining an online presence is vital for schools, not only in terms of keeping the school community up to date with what's happening in the school, but also in terms of attracting potential enrolment. Having a school website is an essential part of this, but web users must specifically visit the school website regularly to receive the information. St. Mary's N.S recognises that teachers and parents engage with social media. It is through these various social media platforms that people connect and share information. The use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. By having a Facebook page/Instagram account, the school is feeding school information, news and notices directly into the personal news feeds of parents and the wider school community.

**Aims:**

The purpose of having a school Facebook page/Instagram account is;

- To continue to advance our school communication system with information shared via Facebook/Instagram, along with the existing methods of text messages, email, Aladdin Connect and the school website.
- To publicise school events, and increase awareness about the school
- To announce any updated information that appears on our website via Facebook/Instagram.
- To highlight positive school achievements in a forum where they can be shared by the school community.
- To make school announcements
- To use Facebook/Instagram as a means of marketing the school to a wider audience.
- To engage the community that St. Mary's serves and act as a key component of our school's online presence.
- To facilitate communication and networking opportunities between parents, especially new or prospective parents.

**Facebook/Instagram Administrator Responsibilities:**

- Elected staff members will respond to posts and comments as soon as practicable.
- Staff who would like to share posts, reminders and events on the page can email the administrators with information they would like uploaded to the elected staff members
- The page will be active at all times and monitored at regular times by the Facebook page/Instagram account administrators
- Only posts from the administrators will be published on the page.
- Ensuring the school has permission to post images, videos, links or other resources
  - When posting information, documents, videos or images to the page administrators will make sure posts are not in breach of copyright laws or permission has been received from the content author to use their materials
  - When people, places or property are identifiable in a video or photo administrators will ensure they have the correct permissions and personal releases to post the content online
- Users will be able to comment on posts made by the page administrators. The posts made by users will be managed using the developed guidelines (see below)
- Deleting content that contravenes these guidelines.

**Community responsibilities:**

By posting comments on the St. Mary's N.S. Facebook Page/Instagram Account users are agreeing to adhere to the following: -

- Protecting your personal privacy and that of others
  - When making a comment do not include any private or personal information about yourself or other people. Private and personal information includes details like your home address, your email account, phone numbers, banking details etc.
- Ensuring you have permission to post images, videos, links or other resources
  - Do not post photos of the pupils or teachers at St. Mary's N.S.
- Being respectful of other people's experiences, cultures and community opinions
  - Do not abuse, harass or threaten others
  - Do not make defamatory, slanderous or comments of a personal nature about individuals, cultures, places or nations
  - Do not use insulting, provocative or hateful language about individuals, cultures, places or nations
  - Do not use obscene or offensive language
  - Do not make comments that racially or religiously vilifies an individual or nation.
  - Do not make comments which may incite, induce or aid violence, discrimination, harassment, victimisation or hatred towards individuals or nations
  - Do not incite, encourage or make reference to conduct that may constitute a criminal or civil offence.
- Posting information that is relevant to the forum, page or discussion topic
  - Make sure your comments and input is relevant to the post uploaded
  - Represent your own personal views or that of an organisation you're authorised to represent – do not impersonate or falsely represent any other person.
- Not posting material that is defamatory or in breach of any law.

**Terms of Use of St. Mary's Facebook page/Instagram Account:**

- Users must ensure that comments are appropriate before submitting them.
- Inappropriate comments could be anything that is:
  - Inclusive of photos of students or teachers
  - Inclusive of information identifying student or teacher identities and/or contact information
  - Off-topic or spam
  - Soliciting funds, goods or services, or advertising
  - Racially, ethnically or religiously offensive
  - Defamatory
  - Threatening, harassing or abusive
  - Obscene, profane or vulgar
  - Illegal or encouraging of criminal acts
  - Known to be inaccurate or contains false attribution
  - Infringing on copyright, trademark or any other rights of others
  - Impersonating anyone else (actual or fictitious).
- Users should not engage in giving negative feedback on school related matters on Facebook/Instagram. The school should be contacted directly via phone or email on such matters.

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- Users are forbidden from discussing individual staff members in a negative light on school Facebook page/Instagram account.
- Users should not ask to become “friends” with staff as failure to respond may cause offence.
- Users should not tag or post photographs of children on the page.
- Users should not add comments that can identify children.
- Any posts deemed inappropriate will be deleted.

**Additional moderation considerations:**

- Comments that promote commercial, business or political party interests may be subject to moderation.
- The posting of weblinks, videos or images without a comment or context may be considered as ‘spam’ and will be subject to moderation.

**Important Point to Note:**

Facebook and Instagram list a minimum age requirement of 13, and all parents/guardians are reminded that children under the age of 13 should not be on Facebook and/or Instagram.

**Disclaimers:**

- Facebook/Instagram Accounts for St. Mary's N.S. are maintained and moderated by elected school staff
- A 'like' or reaction by a user of St. Mary's N.S. page/account does not reflect an endorsement by the school of that Facebook user
- Where links are provided to external websites it is done as a convenience to users and may not be under St. Mary's N.S.'s control. St. Mary's N.S. does not take responsibility for the content or reliability of external links, or for any loss or inconvenience arising from their use.
- St. Mary's N.S.'s social media accounts are open for public comment but do not endorse, and is not accountable for, any views expressed by third parties using social media, external content, links and views are those of the original author.
- Please be aware that all websites and social media sites are public spaces on the internet. Most interactions are publicly viewable, can be traced back to their origin and are searchable over time.
- When parents/guardians/staff or stakeholders use Facebook/Instagram they are using an external site. Facebook/Instagram have their own guidelines and legal policies and all users are bound by their terms and conditions of use. St. Mary's N.S. encourages everyone to read the information posted on the sites before participating in Facebook/Instagram.

**Ratification:**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management: Victor O'Flynn

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2021