



Use of Social Media Policy

June 2024

CAS-36



APPROVAL COMMITTEE	DATE APPROVED	REVIEW DUE DATE
Curriculum & Standards	June 2024	June 2027

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EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The governing board has reviewed this procedure to ensure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, or socio-economic status. This procedure has been developed with due regard to the school's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization.
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
- Foster good relations between different groups.

The governing board is satisfied that this procedure reflects the school's commitment to promoting equality and inclusion.

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Introduction

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking application 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. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with appropriate use. This policy and associated guidance are to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, the use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- Representatives of the school remain safe online
- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders which include employees, Governors, parents and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives.' The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the School representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations. Social networking applications include, but are not limited to, Blogs, for example Blogger, Twitter, online discussion forums such as netmums.com, collaborative spaces, such as Facebook, media sharing services, for example YouTube.

Social Networking as part of School Service

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Headteacher first.

SOCIAL NETWORKING APPLICATIONS THAT ARE USED BY EITHER PARENTS, STAFF AND GOVERNORS OR ON BEHALF OF THE SCHOOL:

- 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 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 our approach to conduct, equal opportunities, bullying or harassment of any sort.



- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents.
- Must not include images (photos or videos) of pupils other than their own children unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured.
- Must not be used to post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.
- Employees and governors should not identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action. Violation of this policy will be considered as serious misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment

PARENTS/ CARERS ARE ASKED TO RAISE QUERIES, CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS WITH THE SCHOOL RATHER THAN POSTING THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

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 of 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 area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area, eg by accepting them as a friend.

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Headteacher.

If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection / designated person (Alastair Haywood).

Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is:

http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage

No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day, whether via school computers or phone.

Please report any improper contact, cyber bullying or sexual harassment to your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

ANYONE FINDING MESSAGES THAT BREACH THE GUIDANCE ABOVE ARE ASKED TO REPORT THEM TO THE SCHOOL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



Cyber Bullying / Harassment

We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying and harassment. Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying or harassment is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where this originates outside the school. This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

- A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and texts from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: this is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using texts. The pupils are in the school: the school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as the pupils attend the school.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, the school is also fully within its rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that parents are thereby condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. If any further referral is made to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the school's recommendation. The school could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but would struggle to deal with the social networking issues.
- Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy.
- If parents / carers refuse to engage and bullying /harassment continues, it can be referred to the police.

This guidance refers also to the use of texts and mobile phones for bullying and harassment.