

Social Media Policy



Created on:	20th September 2024
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Approved on:	
Signed on behalf of Governing Body:	
Role:	
Next review date: (biannually)	September 2026

SCOPE

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity. 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.

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, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- 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.

Use of Social networking sites during directed hours

Staff can only use personal devices with social media whilst on the school premises where the use of personal devices is allowed by the school. This use must still follow the school's acceptable use policy (AUP). Staff must ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their duties.

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 principal or a member of the SLT first.

Use of social networking platforms which are not related to any school services does not need to be approved by the principal. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. The School expects 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.

Social 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 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 misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies
- 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
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

Guidance/protection for staff on using social media

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social media platforms
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social media platforms who is under the age of 18
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the principal.
- Staff must be clear that their social media content is personal and not endorsed or supported by their school. Where staff discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which they work), they must make it clear that the views expressed are theirs.
- Staff must be particularly careful to not reveal any details of staff, pupils, parents or other members of the school community that make it possible to identify any individuals.

Child protection guidance

If the principal receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social media platform in an inappropriate manner as detailed above, they should Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy.

Monitoring use of social media on school equipment

The school reserves the right to monitor all internet use.

The school's ICT provider routinely monitor internet traffic data (websites visited, time and date of visit) to ensure school policies are being adhered to. Periodic reports will be created by ICT so that schools may monitor the use of these facilities. The information obtained through monitoring may be shared internally including with the employee's line manager, HR and ICT staff if there are reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of the rules set out in the school's policies.

Staff need to be aware that such monitoring might reveal sensitive and personal information about you. For example, if staff regularly access social media platforms which detail the activities of a particular political party or religious group, then those visits might indicate their political opinions or religious beliefs. By carrying out such activities using our facilities they give explicit consent for the processing of any sensitive personal data which may be revealed by such monitoring.

The information gathered through monitoring will be retained only long enough for any breach of this policy to come to light and for any investigation to be conducted. Information obtained through monitoring will not be disclosed to third parties (unless the school/Council is under a duty to report matters to a regulatory authority or to a law enforcement agency). More information on monitoring and employee's rights in relation to data can be found in the school/Council's Data Protection policy and Acceptable Use guidance.