



# **Social Networking Policy**

## **Introduction**

This policy provides the acceptable standards for the use of social-networking for all school employees at Warden Hill Infant School. It applies to all school employees, including volunteers and casual workers. This policy should be read in conjunction with Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, October 2015, and the E-mail and Acceptable Use Policy.

This policy covers the use of Social Networking Sites and Applications, such as, but not limited to; Twitter, Facebook, MSN, You Tube, Bebo, My Space etc. It further includes: Blogging, online discussion groups or social networking groups.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out clear guidance of the acceptable use of social networking sites
- Ensure confidentiality of the school, staff and pupils is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all school employees understand the consequences of failing to comply with the Social Networking Policy
- Ensure the appropriate use of the schools resources

## **Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body/Headteacher responsibilities**

HR will provide guidance on updating this policy as and when appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to publicise and make this policy available to all current and future school employees, and to ensure that the standards within it are both monitored and enforced and to advise the Governing Body of any serious breaches of this policy.

It is the responsibility of both the Governing Body and the Headteacher to take corrective and disciplinary measures as are necessary when a breach of this standard occurs and to contact and co-operate with police and other law enforcement agencies where a breach of these standards may constitute a criminal act.

## **Employee's responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the school employee to read and comply with the Social Networking Policy. School employees are reminded that they are bound by the School's Code of Conduct and Teaching Staff are further subject to the Teachers' Standards. Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Legislation 2006 school employees may be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the school has significant concerns or suspicions about an employee's conduct or behaviour.

It is with this in mind that all school employees are reminded that:

**Everything posted online is public, even with the strictest privacy settings. Once something is online, it can be copied and redistributed. Therefore, assume that everything that is written is permanent and can be shared.**

School employees are reminded that they should at all times:

- Have the highest standards of personal conduct (inside and outside of School)
- Ensure that their behaviour (inside and outside of School) does not compromise their position within the school
- Ensure that their judgment and integrity should not be able to be brought into question.
- Ensure that their relationship with members of the community, via social media, does not compromise their position within the school.

Any failure to abide by the Social Networking Policy will result in disciplinary action.

School employees must alert the Governing Body and/or Headteacher where a breach of these standards is suspected or known to have occurred. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

## **Safeguarding Children**

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Employees must abide by the agreed method of communication policies within school. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all school employees. The key principles are:

- School employees **must not** communicate, (including accepting 'friend' requests) with any current pupils of the school, or from any other educational establishment, on social networking sites such as Facebook. This is applicable **even** if a school employee has permission from a pupil's

parent or carer. (This would not apply to school aged pupils that an individual employee is directly related to, e.g. their child, niece or nephew). School employees should not communicate with, including being 'friends' with, past pupils whilst they are below the age of nineteen.

The principles apply:

- Regardless of whether access occurs during or outside of contracted work hours.
- To all technology whether provided by the school or owned by the employee.

### **Unacceptable use of Social Networking Sites/Applications**

Through Social Networking Sites/Applications, school employees **must not**:

- Disclose private and confidential information relating to pupils, parents, other school employees, their employment directly or the school. This also applies to any other educational establishment that the employee has worked within.
- Discuss or reveal any matters relating to the school, previous educational establishments, school employees, pupils or parents
- Publish, share, distribute or comment on any material that may be deemed contrary to British Values\*.
- Identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- Write abusive comments regarding current/previous school employees, pupils or parents/guardians
- Harass or bully school employees, persons unrelated or related to the school through cyber bullying and social exclusion
- View or update their personal site (on Facebook, twitter etc.) during the working day, unless on a designated break. (This includes via a work or personal mobile telephone and/or IPAD).
- By proxy update their personal site (Facebook, twitter etc.) during their normal working day, and must ensure that their social networking site/application is secure at all times from third parties
- Access or share illegal material
- Publish any content, which may be deemed as defamation or discrimination
- Post any images of pupils from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked
- Without permission post any images of school employees on social networking sites from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked.
- Set up and/or use an alias social networking account to circumvent the policy

- Breach any of the school's other policies and procedures such as the School's Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy
- Use it as a forum for raising and escalating concerns regarding the school or the Council. These concerns should be raised using the Whistle Blowing Procedure.

This list is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the E-mail and Acceptable Use Policy.

*\*British Values are defined as those set out in statutory guidance 'The Prevent Duty' June 2015 and the Governmental advice in 'Improving spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils' November 2014 and within any update to either publication.*