

# Berwick Middle School

## Social Media Policy



<b>Date agreed by Governors</b>	<b>June 2016</b>
<b>Date of review</b>	<b>June 2018</b>
<b>Responsible officer</b>	<b>Derryth Hope</b>

## Social Media Policy

### Policy

It is the policy of Berwick Middle school to ensure that procedures are in place in order to:

1. Minimise the legal and personal risks that may arise from an individual's use of social media, both during work time and non-work time;
2. Protect the privacy and safety of employees and children
3. Prevent legal risks that may arise from taking adverse action against employees or potential employees due to the use of social media; and
4. Outline an employees obligation to avoid conduct that may lead to disciplinary or legal procedures being instigated against them

This policy is not meant to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information.

### Purpose

The purposes of this policy are to;

1. Outline the requirements for participation in social media in which an individual's affiliation with Berwick Middle schools is known, identified or presumed;
2. Provide leaders and others in a position to make employment related decisions with guidance on appropriate use of information which may have originated from social media sources; and
3. Mitigate legal and employee relations risks to Berwick Middle School that may be associated with the use of social media (in areas such as employment and equal opportunity issues etc)

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, non-employed assistant/students, Governors etc. It applies to the use of social media during work time and during non- work time, when the person's affiliation with Berwick Middle school is identified, known or presumed.

There will be no retaliation against individuals who raise good faith concerns about actual or potential violations of this policy.

### Definitions

1. **Social Networking:** Generally includes all types of postings and/or interactions on the internet including, but not limited to, social networking sites, blogs and other online journals and diaries, discussion boards and chat rooms, microblogs, 3<sup>rd</sup> party rating sites, smartphone applications, multimedia host sites, and similar media. Social networking activities may also include the permission or refusal or posts by others where an individual can control the content of postings.
2. **Blog:** Short for "web log" a site that allows an individual or groups of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences; may include video formats (vlogs).
3. **Wiki:** allows users to create, edit and link web pages easily; often used to create collaborative, community-driven websites and to populate community websites.

#### **4. Berwick Middle School/Northumberland LA Confidential Information:**

*All information contained in a document marked 'Confidential' or similarly marked (for example "trade secret", 'proprietary information' etc), and all information, whether or not such information is reduced to writing or is so marked, concerning personal information relating to a child or colleague is not for public information.*

#### **Social Media use by All Employees**

1. Berwick Middle School recognizes that employees engage in social networking during non- work time and that, at times, they may refer to their work experience in doing so. Nothing in this policy prohibits employees from doing this.
2. The procedures below apply to all individuals and are designed to reduce the likelihood that their personal social networking activities will have an adverse effect on themselves, Berwick Middle School, other employees, or the children and community.
  - a. Individuals should limit their use of social media during work time unless required by their position; incidental use occurring during break times is not prohibited by this policy. Under no circumstances may an individual access social media on mobile devices while teaching a class or driving for work or while operating any machinery in a work environment.
  - b. Individuals must speak for themselves and not on behalf of the school. If an individual posts content online in a personal capacity and it is relevant to the school, a disclaimer should be provided (e.g "The postings on this site are my own and don't represent the opinions of the school".)
  - c. Under no circumstances may individuals post fake blogs , create false positive or false negative reviews of Berwick Middle School or any of its associates/associates.
  - d. Individuals must not use Berwick Middle School logos, graphics, photographs or designs without seeking prior permissions from a member of Senior Leadership.
  - e. Individuals must not use or disclose any child/colleague identifiable information of any kind including images on any social media platform or smartphone application. Even if the person is not named within the information at issue, if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the person could still be identified from that information, then its disclosure is a violation of confidentiality.
  - f. Individuals should not use personal emails, social media, text messages etc, to store, transmit or receive personal information relating to children at the school
  - g. Prior to establishing online relationships (for example those with businesses etc) with others on line, individuals should give consideration to potential 'conflict of interest' and be prepared to declare this appropriately and if necessary
  - h. Some topics present could significant risk to the School as an organisation and should not be discussed, even with a personal

disclaimer. Non-exhaustive examples of topics that should not be discussed include;

- Speculation about plans for the future eg unannounced strategies,
- Sensitive information about staff

If an individual is unsure about the sensitivity of a particular subject, he/she should seek advice from Leadership Team before participating in a conversation

- i. Individuals shall not announce news about the school that has not already been made public.
- j. If an individual is contacted by a blogger, online journalist or media representative about the school, they should contact a member of the Leadership Team before responding.

**The school recognizes that social networking plays an intrinsic role in the lives of many employees; in many cases playing a positive role. However, where disputes or disagreements do occur, individuals are strongly urged to resolve their differences in a face-to-face setting, which school is willing to facilitate.**

#### *Leadership Responsibility*

1. Leaders may become aware of information considered to be inappropriate or in violation of this policy from a number of sources
2. When information is brought to the Leader's attention and they believe that it may violate the terms of the policy, they should liaise with the Headteacher to determine what further action is required. Where necessary the Disciplinary Procedures will be followed and, if necessary the advice of Human Resources will be sought
3. In terms of the appointment process, social media will only be used a check of a candidate's suitability if this is deemed appropriate by Human Resources and applied fairly and equally to all candidates after all other checks and procedures have taken place.
4. Leadership status does not, of itself, exempt an individual from any aspect of this policy.

#### *Related Policies*

- E-Safety
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Acceptable Use Policy
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