Social Media & Social Networking Policy

Redhill Primary School

Redhill Primary School considers the use of social media and social networking sites to be a strictly personal activity. The use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people, vulnerable adults and staff.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure:

- All staff and pupils are safeguarded against allegations which may arise through inappropriate use of social media and networking sites.
- The reputation of the school and staff is not adversely affected.
- The school is not exposed to legal and governance risks.
- To ensure all staff have signed an appropriate code of conduct in relation to acceptable use of school technology and social interaction.

2. Scope:

Social networking applications include but are not limited to:

- Bloggs for example 'Blogger'
- On-line discussion forums such as 'Ning'
- Collaborative spaces such as 'Wetpaint'
- Media sharing service such as 'Youtube'
- Micro-blogging applications such as 'Twitter'
- Facebook

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of on-line presence such as virtual worlds.

3. Policy:

Staff are to be aware of the following:

- **Never** engage in social networking with a pupil. All electronic communications with pupils should be done via the school e-mail which can be regulated. To engage in social networking with pupils leaves staff vulnerable to accusation and speculation. Staff must take all steps necessary to safeguard themselves. Should you suspect that a pupil seeks an inappropriate

relationship with you, you must bring this to the attention of your line manager immediately.

- Staff are **strongly advised** not to enter into social networking with former pupils. Circumstances may lead staff to be vulnerable to accusation and speculation.

- Be aware that by identifying yourself as a member of Redhill Primary School you become, to some extent, a representative of the school and everything you post has the potential to reflect on the school and its image. Therefore, should staff identify themselves as school members they take on the responsibility for representing the school in a professional and positive manner. Defamatory statements about the school or colleagues can lead to disciplinary action or even lawsuits.

- Staff should **never** name pupils or make reference to a pupil's **personal circumstances**. Safeguarding / child protection breaches can easily be made by the use of an innocent or thoughtless comment.

- Staff should be aware that social networking sites have varying levels of security and as public sites all are vulnerable to breaches in security.

4. Guidance

Staff are asked to take special attention of the "Guidance for Safe-Working Practice for adults working with Children and Young People" - paragraphs 12 (Communication with Children and Young people ~ including the Use of Technology) and 13 (Social Contact). These are shown below:

Paragraph 12 - Communication with Children and Young People (including the Use of Technology).

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and young people including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child/young person outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based websites.

Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the organisation's policy.

Paragraph 13 - Social Contact

Adults who work with children and young people should not seek to have social contact with them or their families, unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with senior managers, or where an adult does not work for an organisation, the parent or carers. If a child or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the adult should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their manager or with the parent of the child or young person. Adults should be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, e.g. pastoral work in the community, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the adult's own family or personal networks.

It is recognised that some adults may support a parent who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent comes to depend upon the adult for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

5. Discipline

Breaches of this policy would be investigated under either the Disciplinary policy or the Anti-Harassment policy whichever is most suitable and may result in disciplinary action being taken. Staff are required to sign the attached code of conduct in relation to social interaction and the use of school IT equipment and technology.

Appendix 1

<p align="center">**Staff, Governor and Visitor**</p>

<p align="center">**ICT and Social Interaction Code of Conduct**</p>

ICT (including data) and the related technologies such as e-mail, the internet and mobile devices are an expected part of our daily working life in school. This policy is designed to ensure that all staff are aware of their professional responsibilities when using any form of ICT. All staff are expected to sign this policy and adhere at all times to its contents.

- I will only use the school's e-mail / Intranet / Learning Platform and any related technologies for professional purposes only (unless permission has been obtained from an appropriate line manager).
- I will comply with the ICT system security and not disclose any passwords provided to me by the school or other related authorities.
- I will ensure that all electronic communications with pupils and staff are compatible with my professional role.
- I will not give out my own personal details, such as mobile phone number, personal e-mail address and social networking identities to pupils.
- I will only use the approved, secure e-mail system(s) for any school business.
- I will ensure that personal data (such as data held on MIS software) is kept secure and is used appropriately, whether in school, taken off the school premises or accessed remotely. Personal data can only be taken out of school or accessed remotely when authorised by the Head Teacher or designated person. Personal or sensitive data taken off-site must be encrypted.
- I will not install any hardware or software without permission of Lend Lease.
- I will not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
  - Images of pupils and/ or staff will only be taken, stored and used for professional purposes in line with school policy and with written consent of the parent, carer or staff member. Images will not be distributed outside the school network without the permission of the parent/carer, member of staff and Head Teacher.
  - I understand that all my use of the Internet and other related technologies can be monitored and logged whilst using school equipment and can be made available, on request, to my Line Manager or Head Teacher.
  - I will respect copyright and intellectual property rights.
  - I will ensure that my online activity, both in school and outside school, will not bring my professional role into disrepute.
  - I will support and promote the school's e-Safety and Data Security policies and help pupils to be safe and responsible in their use of ICT and related technologies.
  - I understand that if my behaviour falls below that expected in this Code of Conduct then I may be subject to the schools Disciplinary Policy.
    - The school allows staff to bring in personal mobile phones and devices for their own use. Under no circumstances does the school allow a member of staff to contact a pupil or parent/ carer using their personal device.
    - The sending of inappropriate text messages between any member of the school community is not allowed.

- Permission must be sought before any image or sound recordings are made on these devices of any member of the school community.
- Users bringing personal devices into school must ensure there is no inappropriate or illegal content on the device.
- The sending of inappropriate text messages between any member of the school community is not allowed.
- Permission must be sought before any image or sound recordings are made on the devices of any member of the school community.
- Where the school provides mobile technologies such as phones, laptops and PDAs for offsite visits and trips, only these devices should be used.
- Where the school provides a laptop for staff, only this device may be used to conduct school business which includes pupil data outside of school.

Personal Mobile Devices (including phones)

Mobile technology provided to staff by the school

Signature:

I agree to follow this Code of Conduct and to support the safe and secure use of ICT throughout the school.

Signature …………………….………………… Date……………………

Full Name.…………………………………..(printed)