



Social Networking Policy

St. Andrew's Cof E Primary acknowledges the increasing number of adults and children who 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 our duties to our School Community as well as our legal responsibilities. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy aims to provide a framework of good practice as well as support and guidance for those within the school community.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that St. Andrew's CofE Primary School, its leaders and governors, are not exposed to any legal risks;
- that the reputation of the school, including any staff and governors, are not adversely affected;
- that all children are safeguarded;
- that any users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of St. Andrew's CofE Primary School.

Scope

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

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
- Online discussion forums
- Collaborative spaces, e.g. Facebook
- Media sharing devices, e.g. YouTube
- 'Microblogging' applications, e.g. Twitter

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 the 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.

Any breach of the terms set out below could result in the application or offending content being removed in accordance with the published complaints procedure and the publishing rights of the responsible school representative being suspended.

The Local Authority reserves the right to require the closure of any applications or removal of content published by the school representatives which may adversely affect the reputation of the school or put it under risk of legal action.

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. St. Andrew's CofE Primary 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.

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 claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of 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 and of conduct or policies relating to staff
- Must not breach the school's equal opportunities, bullying or harassment policies.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- 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 Head Teacher.
- Staff and governors 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.

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 in 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 e.g. by accepting them as a 'friend'

- Social networking sites cannot be accessed during the school day using school equipment
- It is advised that staff should not be 'friends' with parents on social networking sites but we are also aware that friendships outside of school do exist and that it is at the discretion of the staff member. They do, however, need to adhere to the terms set out in the policy with regards to confidentiality and the sharing of any school information
- No photographs, involving children from the school should be posted on social networking sites.

Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking

- No pupils under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from Facebook; there is a mechanism on Facebook where the pupils can be reported via the Help screen
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school day, using school computers or their own personal devices
- All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day (KS2 children only) – failure to do this will result in a total ban for the student bringing mobile phones into school
- Pupils should not request to be 'friends' with staff members
- They should report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens
- We have a zero tolerance on cyber bullying

Guidance/protection for parents on using social networking

- If parents have concerns regarding school issues, these should be made through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites
- Parents are not to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites in relation to school events
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community

Written by Laura Riggs, May 2016