
USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR SCHOOL BASED STAFF

Produced by Schools' HR

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This policy has been consulted centrally and fully agreed by both teaching and support staff trade unions. To change any aspect of this policy at a school level, the relevant body must consult appropriately with school staff and their recognised trade union representatives.

DOCUMENT STATUS

Version	Date	Action
Version 1	17/9/15	Agreed at Support Staff JCC
Version 2	06/03/19	Agreed at Special JCC

Review Date	2021	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. **School X** recognises its statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day to day management of staff is delegated to the Headteacher; ultimate responsibility lies with the Governing Body. This policy applies to all employees, governors and volunteers at the school. The term 'staff' will apply to all employees, governors and volunteers. The governing body will ensure that all staff understand and have ready access to this policy.
- 1.2. The term 'Social Media' refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content online or to participate in social networking.
- 1.3. The Governing Body of **School X** is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social media and social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites has become a very significant part of life for many people.
- 1.4. The Governing Body expect staff to keep appropriate professional distance from students and their families / carers and to make a clear separation between their private social lives and those of students and their families. Social networking between staff and students is prohibited except where the school social networking sites is used as a communication tool with parents, the community and the wider population (see 6.1.14)
- 1.5. Where personal relationships exist between employees and others who are connected to the school (eg. family members and family friends) the employee should advise their line manager accordingly of the relationship.
- 1.6. It is important that all staff are able to use technologies and services effectively and flexibly whilst ensuring that they do not make themselves vulnerable. The Governing Body must balance this with their duty to safeguard students and the reputation of the school.
- 1.7. Annex C – Online Safety within the DFE document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' offers further guidance aimed as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

2. Policy Aims:

- to enable staff to use social tools safely and securely
- to ensure staff are aware of the risks associated with inappropriate use of social communication tools
- to safeguard staff with respect to use of social communication tools and make sure they do not make themselves vulnerable
- to ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard students and the reputation of the school
- to ensure duty of care towards staff and volunteers adversely affected

3. Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- a) ensure this policy is implemented
- b) ensure that all staff have access to this policy and all new employees and volunteers are made aware of it
- c) seek professional advice and support from the Human Resources provider when necessary
- d) take appropriate action, up to and including referring the matter to the police in the case of staff and volunteers being subjected to abuse on social media

The headteacher will:

- a) know this policy and make sure that staff and volunteers also understand the policy and their own responsibilities
- b) ensure that staff and volunteers understand the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of inappropriate use
- c) instigate disciplinary procedures where appropriate
- d) seek advice from HR providers where necessary in the case of potential misuse

Everyone is expected to:

- a) behave responsibly and professionally in connection with their use of social networking sites
- b) co-operate with the headteacher and Governing Body in implementing this policy

4. Use of Social Networking Sites

For their own security, employees should regularly review their privacy settings on all their social networking sites; however all communication via social networking should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available intentionally or otherwise to an audience wider than that originally intended. If in doubt guidance should be sought from an appropriate manager.

- 4.1. Staff should ensure their security settings are at the highest possible level.
- 4.2. Staff are advised not to disclose their affiliation with the school on their profile(s), or write about their work or the school.
- 4.3. Staff must not accept students as friends - personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional, and makes staff vulnerable to allegations. Staff are advised not to be friends with recent students; the potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking. If a member of staff receives messages via social networking that they think could be from a student or a student's family member, they must report it to their line manager and contact the internet service or social network so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action. They should block the student / family member immediately.
- 4.4. Staff must not post photographs of students, except where the staff member's own children attend the school and the photos are of social / family events. Staff members should take care to ensure the suitability of the images and that they are not posted in relation to the school.
- 4.5. Staff must not place inappropriate photographs or indecent remarks on any social network. Staff should avoid language which could be deemed as offensive
- 4.6. Staff must not make defamatory remarks about the school / colleagues / students / parents or post anything that could potentially bring the school into disrepute.
- 4.7. Staff must not disclose any information about the school that is not yet in the public arena. Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual which could be in breach of the General Data Protection Regulations.
- 4.8. Staff must not access social networking for personal use through school information systems or using school equipment. Where a school uses social networking for communication purposes, these networks can be accessed via school equipment. School will monitor this closely and only those with administrator rights should communicate in this way. Staff have a duty to report

any misuse or abuse by other staff members, students or the wider community to the Headteacher.

5. Breaches of the Policy

- 5.1. The Governing Body does not discourage staff from using social networking; however staff should be aware that inappropriate use of social networking will be taken seriously. Any posts or comments which could be deemed online bullying or harassment will be dealt with in the same way as other instances of bullying or harassment.
- 5.2. Allegations of inappropriate use of social networking will be investigated under the school's disciplinary policy and, where appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken. .
- 5.3. There may be instances where the school would be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour where there are concerns about its legality.
- 5.4. From time to time, staff and volunteers at school may be subject to abuse on social networking sites in connection with their role in school. Any such abuses should be reported immediately to the headteacher, who will inform governors and take whatever action is possible to deal with the situation and support the affected colleagues.