St. Mary's C.E. (A) Primary School

Greenfield

Social Networking Policy

2018

'We enjoy learning and achieving in a Christian environment'

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Mission Statement
'We enjoy learning and achieving in a Christian environment.'

Every Child Matters at St. Mary's
St. Mary's wants every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. This policy has been written with careful consideration of the Every Child Matters Agenda.

Healthy School Statement
St. Mary's is a Healthy School with healthy attitudes embedded in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Children are encouraged to be active and maintain healthy relationships with their peers and adults as well as making choices about healthy lifestyles.

Building Learning Power Statement
At St. Mary's, we encourage all pupils to build their own learning power. Building Learning Power emphasises the development of lifelong learning values and skills. We aim to ensure that all children develop persistence and curiosity for learning and become adventurous risk takers who are not afraid of the 'don't know' state of mind. At St. Mary's, children will develop the ability to take responsibility for their own learning and self-assess and be able to articulate themselves as a learner. They will have the opportunity to develop the ability to know what's worth learning, know how to face confusion and know the best learning tool for the job.

Equality Statement
This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability.

Introduction

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at St Mary's Primary School. This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for activities and postings on social networking sites by its employees. It will also provide guidance for parents.

When we are thinking about social networking, a common sense approach should be taken. As such underlying safeguarding principles and basic manners in how we communicate with people must be adhered to. If it is right and proper to be courteous, discrete and professional when communication with people in person (inside or outside of school), then the same rules should apply when typing anything into a computer/ communication device. Likewise if the rules to keep children safe and the sharing of information protocols within school are important when dealing face to face with people, the same principles should again apply when posting anything onto the World Wide Web.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the School's recommendations and requirements for the use of social networking media by its employees. In doing so, the School seeks to achieve an appropriate balance in the use of social networks by staff as private individuals, but also as employees and educators, with professional reputations and careers to maintain, and contractual and legislative requirements to adhere to.

The term 'employee' or staff covers all employees/staff of the School, including casual staff and agency employees.

This policy also provides further guidelines of the use of social networking sites by pupils within school, comments posted by parents/carers and dealing with incidents of online bullying.

Social networking applications include, but are not limted to:
- Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat)
- Media sharing services, for example You Tube
- Micro blogging applications (e.g. Twitter, Yammer, MyLife)
- Online discussion forums and opinion sites (e.g. Ning)
- Blogs (e.g. Blogger, LiveJournal, Xanga

Whilst the School does not wish to discourage staff from using such sites on the internet in their personal time, it does expect certain standards of conduct to be observed in order to protect the School and its reputation, and also to protect staff from the dangers of inappropriate use.

Key Principles
All members of the St Mary's Primary School community have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.

It is important for all members of our community to be protected from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that all adults act responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking. Friendships may be taken up with ex pupils once they reach the age of 18.

This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted.

The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.

The school's Acceptable Use Policy outlined the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to the use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher or member of staff and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child, it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two.

Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Parents must not post pictures of pupil, others than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti- Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

The Governing Body understand that there are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged. Futhermore, laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:
- expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession

Responsibilities and Acountability
Headteachers/Senior Leaders:
- Should ensure that all existing and new staff are familiar with this policy and its relationship to the School's standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT
- Must ensure that any allegations raised in respect of access to social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct.

Employees:
- Should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and its relationship to the School's standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT
- Should raise any queries or areas of concern they have relating to the use of social networking sites and interpretation of this Policy, with their line manager in the first instance
- Must comply with this policy where specific activities/conduct is prohibited

Governors:
- Will review this policy and its application on an annual basis
- Should ensure that their own conduct is online with that expected of staff, as outlined in this policy

Recommendations and requirements for the use of online social networks
Working in an educational setting with young people, staff have a professional image to uphold, and how individuals conduct themselves online, helps to determine this image.

Code of Conduct – Social Networking
Logo/Published materials:
- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material is not permissible without the permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.

Equipment:
- Connecting school ICT equipment to home networks is permitted (wired or wireless). You must ensure that your home Wi-Fi connection has the appropriate security encryption.

Friends/Befriending:
- One of the functions of social networks is the ability to 'friend' others, creating a group of individuals who share personal news and/or interests. The School prohibits staff from accepting invitations to 'friend' pupils. Pupils or their families as friends is not permissable until the child has reached the age of 18 and has no siblings in the school.
- Staff must not initiate friendships with pupils, or pupils' family members/friends.
- Staff who maintain social networking friendships with work colleagues, are required to adhere to the requirements below relating to content of interactions

Content of Interactions:
Staff must not make reference on social networking sites to the School, its employees, pupils, and their families. If staff adhere to this recommendation then the personal content of an individual's social networking memberships is unlikely to be of concern to the School.

If employment at the School is referred to, then the information posted would need to comply with the conditions set out below.
- Any references made to the School, its employees, pupils and their families, should comply with the School's policies on conduct/misconduct. equal opportunities, and bullying and harassment
- Staff must not post information on a social networking site which is confidential to the School, its employees, its pupils or their families
- Staff must not post entries onto social networking sites which are derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive in any way, or which have the potential to bring the School into disrepute.
- Staff should not use the School Logo on their own personal social networking accounts, and should not post any photographic images that include pupils or members of staff
- Staff must not express personal views which could be misinterpreted as those of the School or Local Council
- When posting any information onto a social networking site, staff must not post any entry that puts their effectiveness to perform their normal duties at risk
- If individuals feel aggrieved about some aspect of their work or employment, there are appropriate informal and formal avenues, internally within the School, which allow staff to raise4 and progress such matters. Social networks are not the appropriate forum to raise such matters. employees should discuss any concerns with the Headteacher/Key Stage Leader in the first instance.

Security:
Staff are advised to check their security profiles and privacy settings on the social networks that they use. If individuals are not clear about how to restrict access to their content, they should regard all content as publicly available and act accordingly.

In using social networking sites, staff are recommended to only post content that they would wish to be in the public domain, even is content is subsequently removed from a site it may remain available and accessible. Staff should consider not only how content could reflect on them, by also on their professionalism and the reputation of the School as their employer.

Even with privacy settings in place it is still possible that the personal details of staff may be accessed more broadly that the other networkers identified by them. Any reference to such information by pupils and/ or their families, which a staff member deems to be inappropriate or is concerned about, should be reported to their line manager in the first instance.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil (or group of pupils) has made inappropriate/ insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they must report this to the Headteacher so that the appropriate process can be followed.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Policy and Code of Conduct:
In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply: Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Last Review: Summer 2018
Next Review: Summer 2019
Approved by: Debbie Dorobat, Chair of RE, Worship and Pastoral Committee
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