



Social Media Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites.

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

Laurel Avenue Community Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation.

This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school, its staff, parents, carers and children. This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- ◆ *That the school is not exposed to legal risks*
- ◆ *That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected*
- ◆ *That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.*

Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

“If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us”

“We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk to their children about safe internet use can be found on this help page”

MSN recommend 13 but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on MSN

Scope

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

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, for example Blogger*
- ◆ *Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com*
- ◆ *Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook*
- ◆ *Media sharing services, for example YouTube*
- ◆ *‘Micro-blogging’ applications, for example 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 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.

This policy is subject to the school’s Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

This policy:

Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.

Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere. Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education

Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school

Laurel Avenue Community Primary School respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

SLT

Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.

Developing and implementing the Social Media policy

Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.

Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.

Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts

Approve account creation

Administrator / Moderator

Create the account following SLT approval

Store account details, including passwords securely

Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account

Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

Staff

Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies

Attending appropriate training

Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts

Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Social Networking as part of School Service

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher first.

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

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. Laurel Avenue Community 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 other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.*
- ◆ *Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns*
- ◆ *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 of conduct or policies relating to staff.*
- ◆ *Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies*

- ◆ *Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents*
- ◆ *No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with*
- ◆ *Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school*
- ◆ *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 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.*

Monitoring

School's Facebook Account must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts will not be responded to, and parents/carers are informed of this. Parents/carers will be invited to discuss any inappropriate comments and these will be removed and the user could be banned. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour

Laurel Avenue Community Primary School requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School's Facebook account must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.

Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.

If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.

Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.

The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.

Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.

If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken

If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

Engaging

Conversational

Informative

Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.

Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts

Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.

If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

Staff

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

This means that 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.

Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the Headteacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken

The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.

It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child. If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school

Pupils

Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils of the school on any personal social media network account. This means that 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.

The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.

Pupils are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is: http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage

No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day

No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites.

If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens

No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.

Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.

Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to you tutor / class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

Parents/Carers

If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.

The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.

Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.

The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Child protection guidance

If the Headteacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy.

Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate via Durham Police Child Protection Team.

If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes.

If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality.

The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.

If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out

Cyber Bullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Laurel Avenue Community Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social; networking sites.

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and text from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.

A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using MSN and Facebook. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.

A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is the tricky one. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the schools recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.

Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy.

If parents/carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment

This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

Signed: G Davison

Headteacher

Date: April 2019

Signed: C Linfoot

Chair of Community and SMSC Committee

Date: April 2019

Review: April 2022

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- *“Nothing” on social media is truly private*
- *Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts*
- *Check your settings regularly and test your privacy*
- *Keep an eye on your digital footprint*
- *Keep your personal information private*
- *Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to*
- *When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post*
- *If you want to criticise, do it politely.*
- *Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?*
- *Know how to report a problem*

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- *Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school*
- *Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views*
- *Make it clear who is posting content*
- *Use an appropriate and professional tone*
- *Be respectful to all parties*
- *Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author*
- *Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner*
- *Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion*
- *Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process*
- *Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible*

The Don'ts

- *Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute*
- *Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material*
- *Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation*
- *Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content*
- *Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content*
- *Don't use social media to air internal grievances*