

# Wrighton Church of England Primary School

## Social Media Policy

### 1.0 OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure Wrighton C of E Primary school (henceforth known as ‘the school’) exposure to legal and governance risks is minimised;
- Enable colleagues at the school to use social networking sites safely and securely; -
- Ensure that colleagues are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites and any impacts in relation to their employment;
- Ensure that colleagues are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites – and how this may impact on their employment;
- Safeguard colleagues at the school in connection with the use of social networking sites and minimise the risk that they make themselves vulnerable to allegations
- Ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school and those who work for it, the wider community and the Local Authority.

### 2.0 SCOPE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 In this Policy colleague’ means all individuals engaged by the school in a paid or voluntary capacity including parent helpers and governors, those on work experience placements and agency colleagues. Third parties acting on behalf or in partnership with the school are also expected to adhere to this guidance.

2.2 This Policy applies to social networking sites, personal web pages, personal space provided by internet providers and internet presences which make available personal information/opinions to the general public including but not limited to Facebook, Pinterest, Bebo, MySpace, Windows Live Spaces, MSN, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, wikis, forums, bulletin boards, chatrooms, multiplayer on-line gaming, virtual worlds and instant messenger.

2.3 In this Policy ‘pupil’ should, where relevant, be taken to include any child/young person attending the school. If a colleague has a difficulty complying with this Policy (for example if they are related to a pupil attending the school) they should declare this relationship to either the Head teacher. This policy does not cover relationships which are not facilitated directly or indirectly by the school.

2.4 This Policy will be part of the Induction programme for all new colleagues at the school and on its introduction, will be shared with all existing colleagues.

2.5 The Governing Body does not discourage colleagues at the school from using social networking sites. However, all colleagues at the school should be aware that the Governing Body will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. Instances of on-line bullying and harassment will be regarded as a serious matter and will be dealt with under the school’s Disciplinary Policy. Any school colleague who is being bullied or harassed on-line should report this to the Head teacher / their Line Manager. Please also see the School’s ICT Policy for expectations around the level of use of Social Networking sites.

2.6 In the event that this Policy is not followed or any instances of the inappropriate use of social networking sites are brought to the attention of the School, these may be investigated under the School's Disciplinary Policy and depending on the seriousness of the matter disciplinary action may be taken which may result in dismissal. A serious breach of the Policy may be regarded as gross misconduct, leading to summary dismissal.

2.7 Where there are concerns as to the legality of any activity or behaviour or any allegations which have a children's safeguarding dimension the School or Local Authority will be obliged to inform the police.

### **3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

3.1 The Governing Body shall:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that deal with the use of social networking sites;
- Ensure that all colleagues at the school have access to this policy and that colleagues including new colleagues are made aware of it.

3.2 Head teachers/Line Managers shall:

- Be familiar with this policy and guidelines and ensure that colleagues understand the policy and their own responsibilities;
- Ensure that colleagues at the school are aware of the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of the inappropriate use of them;
- Make partners and any other third parties aware of this guidance where relevant.
- Instigate disciplinary procedures where appropriate to do so;
- Seek advice where necessary from Human Resources on the approach to be adopted if they are made aware of any potential issue.

3.3 Colleagues at the school shall:

- Behave responsibly and professionally at all times in connection with the use of social networking sites.
- Ensure that all communication with pupils (including on-line communication) takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries as set out in the DfE Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings and preferably using school-based systems.
- Raise any concerns that any colleague(s) is/are not acting in accordance with this Policy with their line manager/the Head teacher/the school's designated teacher / safeguarding officer.
- Act in accordance with the school's Whistle-blowing Policy
- Use their professional judgment and, where no specific guidance exists, take the most prudent action possible and consult with their manager or the Head teacher if they are unsure.
- Co-operate with management in ensuring the implementation of this policy.
- Respect the privacy and feelings of others.
- Keep a professional distance from pupils and ensure a clear separation of the private social lives of colleagues at the school and those of pupils.
- Report to their Head teacher, school designated safeguarding teacher/officer or line manager any occasions when a pupil attempts to involve them in on-line or social networking activity.

3.4 Parents and third parties are encouraged to:

- Raise any concerns that any colleague(s) at the school is/are not acting in accordance with this Policy with the Head teacher.

#### **4.0 USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

4.1 All colleagues at the school should follow the following guidance / procedures: Please note: if a colleague at the school believes they will have any difficulty complying with any of the requirements below for whatever reason (for example, where they are related to a pupil) , they should discuss the matter with the Head teacher / the school designated safeguarding teacher/officer. Failure to do so will be regarded as a serious matter.

1. Colleagues at the school must not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment;
2. Colleagues at the school must not accept pupils as friends or use internet or web-based communication channels to send any personal messages to pupils – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes colleagues at the school vulnerable to allegations;
3. Colleagues at the school are advised not to be friends with recent pupils (the potential for colleagues at the school to be compromised in terms of content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking) and colleagues at the school are also advised not to be friends with pupils at other schools as this is likely to make them vulnerable to allegations and may be open to investigation by the Local Authority or police. Where a colleague is considering not following this advice, they are required to discuss the matter, and the implications with the Head teacher or designated children’s safeguarding teacher/officer.
4. Any student-initiated communication, on-line friendships/friend requests must be declined and reported to the Head teacher or designated children’s safeguarding teacher/officer (If a colleague receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil they must report it to their line manager/Head teacher and discuss whether it is appropriate for the colleague to contact the internet service or social networking provider so that the provider can investigate and take the appropriate action);
5. Colleagues at the school should not share any personal information with any pupil (including personal contact details, personal website addresses/social networking site details);
6. Colleagues at the school should not place/post any material (or links to any material) of a compromising nature (that is, any material a reasonable person might find obscene or offensive (such as sexually explicit or unlawfully discriminatory material) including inappropriate photographs or indecent remarks or material relating to illegal activity) on any social network space;

7. Colleagues at the school are advised not to write about their work but where a colleague at the school chooses to do so:

- he/she should make it clear that the views expressed are his/hers only and do not reflect the views of the school/Local Authority (and all other guidelines in this policy must still be adhered to when making any reference to the workplace) and
- he/she must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act or disclose any information about the school/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena;

8. Colleagues at the school should not post photographs of pupils under any circumstances and should not post photographs of colleagues or parents without their express permission;

9. Colleagues at the school should not make abusive/defamatory/undermining/derogatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils/parents/governors or the Local Authority or post anything that misrepresents or could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute;

10. Colleagues at the school should not disclose confidential information relating to their employment at the school;

11. Colleagues at the school must not link their own sites to the school website or use the school's or the Local Authority's logo or any other identifiers on their personal web pages;

12. If any colleague at the school receives media contact regarding the content of their site or is offered payment for site content which relates to the school they must consult their Head teacher/line manager;

13. No colleague at the school should use any internet/on-line resources to seek information on any pupil, parent or other colleague at the school other than for the purposes of legitimate monitoring of the usage of Social Networking sites by designated managers / officers.

14. Colleagues at the school should not use social networking sites to seek to influence pupils regarding their own political or religious views or recruit them to an organisation of this kind using their status as a trusted adult to encourage this

4.2 All communication via social networking sites 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. Colleagues at the school are strongly advised, in their own interests, to take steps to

ensure that their on-line personal data is not accessible to anybody who they do not want to have permission to access it. For example, they are advised to check the security and privacy settings of any social networking site they subscribe to and set these to maximum. For further information see the safer internet website <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/> and the South West Grid for Learning Resources <http://www.swgfl.org.uk/Staying-Safe>

4.3 The School reserves the right to take action to obtain the removal of any content posted by colleagues at the school which may adversely affect the reputation of the school (or any colleague, governor, pupil or parent at the school) or put it at risk of legal action. Should the school decide to pursue this course of action, the advice of the Local Authority's Marketing and Communications Team may be sought.

4.4 We would expect all former colleagues at the school to continue to be mindful of good children's safeguarding practice and of the school's reputation in using social networking sites.

## **5.0 USE OF SCHOOL SITES, PAGES AND SPACES**

5.1 All colleagues at the school should follow the following guidance / procedures:

1. The School ICT Policy must be adhered to at all times when content is posted on the school sponsored sites/pages/spaces or on-line school communication systems/networks are used. Usage will be monitored under the ICT Policy / E-Safety Policy and any breach in this regard will result in the offending content being removed and may result in disciplinary action and any 'publishing' rights of the relevant colleague being suspended in accordance with the School's ICT Policy.
2. Communications or pages undertaken/run on behalf of the school must be password protected and run from the school website.
3. Colleagues at the school must not run social network spaces for student use on a personal basis. If a network is to be used to support students with coursework and as part of the educational process, professional spaces must be created by colleagues and pupils using a restricted, school-endorsed networking platform in line with school ICT and governance policies. (Specific sites can be negotiated via a license process for relevant colleagues, with specific guidelines on use and consequences for breaches of the guidelines being set out and backed by a signed undertaking from the relevant colleagues to use the sites in accordance with the guidelines.)
4. Any inappropriate behaviour by pupils on-line must be reported to the Head teacher or member of the senior leadership team and will be dealt with through the school's pupil disciplinary process.
5. Colleagues at the school should not request or respond to any personal information from any pupil unless consistent with their professional role and approved by the school.

## **6.0. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

6.1 Managers must not discriminate on the grounds of race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or other grounds and ensure that the needs of colleagues are given careful consideration when applying this Policy.

## **7.0. RELEVANT POLICIES/GUIDANCE**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Children's Safeguarding Guidance / Guidance for Safer Working Practices
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Code of conduct
- Equality Scheme / Policy
- ICT Policy/Acceptable use Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy

## **8.0 LEGISLATION**

8.1 The following legislation must be considered when adhering to this policy:

- Obscene Publications Act 1959
- Protection of Children Act 1988
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Defamation Act 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

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