

Social Media Policy and Declaration (September 2021)

The purpose of the policy is to provide clarity to all school staff on the use of any social media. Social media is a broad term for any kind of ***platform which enables people to directly interact with each other***. However, some games and video sharing platforms have social media elements to them. The principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the electronic medium.

Any member of staff can have an account on a social media. However, it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that anything placed on the social media is appropriate and meets the standards expected of professional teachers and school support staff.

It is the responsibility of staff members to remain vigilant and ensure that they regularly review privacy levels of their social media accounts to ensure they are 'restricted', and to protect their own privacy. This does not negate responsibility for the requirements below.

Members of staff are also advised to be cautious about closed WhatsApp groups or similar, in that someone within the group could choose to share the content.

The policy relates to contact with any young person under 19 years of age, any 'looked after child' under the age of 21 years of age, and any young person with special educational needs under the age of 24 years of age.

NB School employees who have their own social media accounts may have contact with relatives/ family friends, but all the requirements below would still apply.

All school staff **must**:

- demonstrate honesty and integrity, and uphold public trust and confidence in respect of anything placed on social media sites
- ensure that any content they share on any social networking web site, at any time, would be deemed as appropriate, ie staff are personally responsible for ensuring that any privacy settings meet this requirement
- ensure appropriate language is used at all times, for any comments placed on social networking sites
- ensure that any comments/images/videos, at any time, could not be deemed as defamatory or in breach of any relevant legislation.
- decline 'friend requests' from pupils and ex-pupils, which they receive in their personal social media accounts (in line with the age restrictions above)
- notify the headteacher immediately of any malicious or concerning postings

All school staff **must not**:

- knowingly have personal contact with current or ex-pupils, or other children or young people where there is a relationship developed as part of their 'professional' role, eg music tutor, on any social media
- contact parents or carers (or respond to them) on personal social media sites to discuss school issues
- use social media sites as a forum to make derogatory comments which could bring the school into disrepute, including making comments about pupils, parents, other staff members, the senior leadership team, governors, local authority or the wider community
- publish photographs, videos or any other types of images of pupils and their families
- use personal communication media, eg email or mobile phone, for contact with pupils

I have read the policy on the use of social media and understand that any breaches of this policy could result in disciplinary action and may result in dismissal.

Signed	Date
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This document has been developed in consultation with trade unions and professional associations.