

# Seven Fields Primary School .

## Social Media Policy

1.1 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 policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, Directors, visitors, parent helpers, parents and carers and school staff at Seven Fields Primary School.

**1.2 It will also provide very important guidance for parents in how the use of Social Media sites are undertaken in an acceptable or unacceptable manner whilst you attend Seven Fields Primary School..**

1.3 There are four key areas:

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
- B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity
- C. Comments posted by parents/carers
- D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

### 1.4. A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

1.41. The school's Acceptable Behaviours Policy outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Social Media sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher 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.

1.42. Currently the school does not include the use of Social Media sites such as blogging sites (Primary blogger) and Twitter. If the school uses these sites in the near future Parents will be asked to give permission for children to access these sites in school as well as permission for images of their child / child's work to be included on the site.

1.43 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.

### 1.5. B Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.

1.51. It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner. Guidance is given to staff in regular Safeguarding training and Briefings. However the key points that follow **must** be adhered to.

-Staff must never add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).

- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.

- Current and ex staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Board of Directors.

-Current and ex staff should not use social media sites to post any remarks about the school that could be defamatory or libellous.

.- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).

-Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.

-Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.

-Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action. The Directors hold the right to seek address through the school's Legal Advisers for inappropriate use of social media sites by current or ex staff.

## **1.6 C. Comments posted by parents/carers**

1.61. 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, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents such as The Complaints Procedure, 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.

The following points must be adhered to:

-.Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other 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 never make a complaint about another family or pupil using a social media site.

- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community these include any other pupil, any other family or member of staff.

#### **1.7 D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

1.71. 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 Directors and Senior Leadership Team will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter to the parent formally warning them of the unacceptability of their actions.

1.72 The Senior Leadership and Board of Directors understands that, "There are circumstances in which police and legal involvement are appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "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." (National Association of Headteachers)