SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The three with the widest use are Facebook, Twitter and MSN.
The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.
This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff, and children, and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. We have consulted with the NAHT and used guidelines from other schools in order to ensure that we are well informed when writing this policy.
Our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and adults.
The requirements in this policy 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.

There are five key areas:

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

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.

MSN recommend 13 but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on MSN
This guidance is to advise and protect staff from accusations of improper relationships with pupils:

Lutley Primary School provides online safety training for all parents and e-safety teaching and learning is built in to the curriculum throughout the school.

SCOPE

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, parents, volunteers, 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 or if the school is mentioned in any such correspondence.
Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:
 Blogs, for example Blogger
 Twitter
 Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
 Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
 Media sharing services, for example YouTube

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 Equal Opportunities Policy.

Use of Social networking sites in work time

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher.
Social networking may be used by staff in an official capacity, for marketing purposes whilst adhering to the policy guidelines.

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 or using Twitter for CPD purposes) 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. Lutley 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.

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 schools, equal opportunities, anti-bullying, e-safety, data protection, acceptable usage, disciplinary, safeguarding and confidential reporting 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 effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to, and including, termination of employment.

Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites

- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18

- 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 head teacher in writing.

- 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.

- If photographs and the names of children within an educational context are used for marketing purposes, the permission of parents/carers must be sort before uploading.

- Personal and professional use of social media should be kept separate. Staff may wish to use social media for CPD within a professional capacity but ensure that this is a personal account and there is no reference to your place of work.

- If using the Lutley Primary or Hales Valley Teaching School names to access social media for marketing / networking purposes then factual information needs to be given and no personal opinions which can reflect on the institutions.

We have duty of care to our staff as an employer so please notify the head teacher if there is anything on social media which concerns or upsets you.

Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

- 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 time of writing this policy the direct link for this is: http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage   All terms and conditions of these websites must be followed at all times.

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

- All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using a mobile phone

- 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 Head teacher. 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 your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

- We have a zero tolerance policy to cyber bullying

Cyber Bullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Lutley 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 schools adopted anti bullying policy.
- If parent / 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

Guidance/protection for Parents on using Social Networking

- Events such as sports days, assemblies etc. Parents may take photos and video but these must not be uploaded to any social network or websites.
- Staff, visitors, governors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their own records during the day.
- If parents have a complaint, this should be directed to the school office in the first instance, info@lutley.dudley.sch.uk. Social media should not be used for this purpose.

Child protection guidance

If the head teacher 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 LA who will investigate via Dudley Authority 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 LA 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.

Actions to be taken if the policy is breached:

If members of staff, parents or pupils are found to have uploaded comments or images that are derogatory, offensive and upsetting and which breach the policy as cited above then the following steps will be taken:

- Record the offending behaviour through screen shots, print outs and details of URLs.
- The behaviour and findings will be reported to governors and to the police if applicable.
- The offender(s) will be invited in to a meeting to discuss any offensive or threatening comments made online and will be asked to remove the content.
- It will be reported to the social media website concerned in an attempt to take down the content.
- If a member of staff is found to have breached this policy then the disciplinary policy will be followed and action will be taken when necessary.

Review date: October 2017

Headteacher: Rebecca Cox