



Myton Park Primary School

Social Networking Policy

<i>CREATED/REVISED:</i>	<i>Summer 16</i>
<i>BY:</i>	<i>Local Authority</i>
<i>APPROVED BY GOVERNING BODY:</i>	<i>Resources Meeting 3 November 16</i>

This procedure has been consulted with the Professional Associations/Trade Unions and is recommended for adoption

Social Networking Policy for Staff in Schools

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Governing Body of Myton Park Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of the internet and social media applications that allow users to interact with one another. Examples of such sites include, but are not limited to, blogs (short for web log), MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, YouTube, Windows Live Spaces, MSN, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chatrooms, Wikipedia and instant messenger.*
- 1.2 While acknowledging the benefits of these applications for new opportunities for communication it is recognised that the internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media, however the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.*
- 1.3 Staff are expected to keep a professional distance from pupils and there should be a clear separation of the private social lives of staff and that of pupils. There is no need for social networking to go on between staff and pupils and there is no clear educational benefit.*
- 1.4 It is important that staff are able to use technology services effectively and flexibly whilst ensuring that they do not make themselves vulnerable. However, it is also important to ensure that this is balanced with the Governing Body's duty to safeguard children/staff, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.*

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 The policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for the School on School premises, for example, agency staff, builders, and drivers. It also covers trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the School. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy*

3. Aims

- 3.1 The policy aims to:*
 - Enable staff members to use social networking sites safely and securely;*
 - Ensure that staff members are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites;*
 - Safeguard staff members in connection with the use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable;*

- Ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 The School is committed to ensuring that all staff members adhere to confidentiality that meets the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the School are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:-

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010

4.2 Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
- School business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
- Politically sensitive information.

4.3 Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952, 1996 and 2013
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communication Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003 and
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1998.

4.4 Staff should also be mindful that the School could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers on line or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc. or who defame a third party while at work may render the School liable to the injured party.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Governing Body shall:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that deal with the use of social media sites;
- Ensure that staff members have access to this policy and that new staff members are made aware of it. (for definition of staff members see paragraph 2.1)

5.2 Headteacher's shall:

- Be familiar with this policy and guidelines and ensure that staff members understand the policy and their own responsibilities;
- Ensure that staff members are aware of the risks of the use of social media sites and the possible implications of the inappropriate use of them;
- Instigate disciplinary or other appropriate 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.

5.3 Staff Members shall:

- At all times behave responsibly and professionally in connection with the use of social media sites, and be conscious of the need to keep personal and professional lives separate
- Not engage in activities involving social media which might bring the School/Local Authority into disrepute.
- Co-operate with management in ensuring the implementation of this policy.

5.4 Schools HR Advisory Service shall:

- Provide the necessary professional advice and support to the Governing Body and all school staff when required.

6. Use of Social Media Sites

6.1 For staff members own security all communication via social media 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. It is therefore advised that staff members follow the following procedures:

- I. Staff members must not access social media sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment;
- II. Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive to others and be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of the School;
- III. Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of the School or the Local Authority in their personal webspace. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the School and the Local Authority and to safeguard the privacy of

staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

- IV. Staff members must not accept pupils as friends and are advised **not** to be friends with ex pupils - personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff very vulnerable to allegations;
- V. Staff members should not place inappropriate photographs or post indecent remarks on any social network space;
- VI. If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil they must report it to their Headteacher promptly and contact the internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action;
- VII. Staff members are advised not to write about their work but where a member of staff 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. However, all other guidelines in this policy must be adhered to when making any reference to the workplace;
- VIII. Staff members 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;
- IX. Staff must not disclose any information about the School/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena or relates to their employment at the School
- X. In no circumstances should staff post photographs of pupils;
- XI. Staff should not make defamatory remarks about the School/colleagues/pupils or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute;
- XII. Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity;
- XIII. The School does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the School starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way;
- XIV. On leaving the School service, staff members must not contact School pupils by means of personal social media sites. Similarly,

- staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media;*
- XV. *Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites; Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place;*
- XVI. *Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy.*

7. Monitoring of Internet Use

- 7.1 *The School monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.*
- 7.2 *Users of the School email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the School's ICT system.*

8. Breaches of the Policy

- 8.1 *The Governing Body does not discourage staff from using social media sites. However, all staff should be aware that the Governing Body will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. If occasions arise that could be deemed to be online bullying or harassment, these will be dealt with in line with the appropriate procedures.*
- 8.2 *A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation/damage to the reputation of the School/Local Authority or any illegal acts or acts that render the School/Local Authority liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the seriousness of the allegations, the disciplinary action may lead to dismissal.*
- 8.3 *There may be instances where the School or Local Authority will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour for which there are concerns as to its legality.*

9. *Other useful contacts and related policies*

*School Disciplinary Procedure
School Code of Conduct Policy
School Child Protection Policy*

www.facebook.com/communitystandards
www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline

Department for Education related documents:

*Teachers Standards July 2011 (updated June 2013)
Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015)*

SCHOOLS HR CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any questions in relation to these procedures, please contact the Schools HR Advisory Service for advice and assistance.

TELEPHONE EMAIL

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