



Warden Hill Infant School

Learning Together, Growing Together

Social Networking Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy provides the acceptable standards for the use of social-networking for all employees at Warden Hill Infant School. Volunteers and casual workers should also be made aware of the standards and expectations set out in this policy.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, Keeping Children Safe In Education (2018), the Internet and E-mail and Acceptable Use Policy and the Mobile Phone and Digital Imaging Policy.
- 1.3 Social Networking is a term used to describe any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with one another. Some online games and video sharing platforms also have social networking elements to them. Examples of the Social Networking Sites and Applications covered by this policy include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn Youtube, Snapchat, and Instagram etc. It further includes online blogging, gaming platforms such as Minecraft or World of Warcraft or online discussion groups.
- 1.4 The school understands that many people may choose to use social networking sites in their private lives. This policy does not seek to prevent the use of social media but seeks to provide clear guidelines on the acceptable use of social media by employees.

2.0 Communications

- 2.1 There are two different forms of communication: personal communications and professional communications.
- 2.2 Personal communications are those made via a personal social networking account. Personal communications that demonstrate a failure to follow professional standards or could damage the school/employer reputation are within the scope of this policy.

2.3 Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school social media account or using the school name. All professional communications are within scope of this policy.

3.0 Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out clear guidance on the acceptable use of social networking sites
- Safeguard children
- Ensure confidentiality of the school, employees and pupils is maintained at all times
- To protect the reputation of the school/ /trust
- Ensure that all employees understand the consequences of failing to comply with the Social Networking Policy
- Ensure the appropriate use of the school's resources

4.0 Governing Body/Headteacher responsibilities

4.1 Luton HR Traded Services will provide guidance on updating this policy as and when appropriate.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to publicise and make this policy available to all, ensuring that the standards within it are both monitored and enforced, and to advise the Governing Body of any serious breaches of this policy.

4.3 It is the responsibility of both the Governing Body and the Headteacher to take corrective and/or disciplinary measures as are necessary when a breach of this standard occurs and to contact and co-operate with police and other law enforcement agencies where a breach of these standards may constitute a criminal act.

5.0 Employees' responsibilities

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the employee, volunteers or casual worker to read and comply with the Social Networking Policy. Any failure to abide by the Social Networking Policy may result in disciplinary action.
- 5.2 Employees, volunteers and casual workers **must** alert the Headteacher or a relevant senior member of staff where a breach of the policy, by you or another employee, is suspected or known to have occurred. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 5.3 **School employees must be aware that everything posted online is public in nature, even with the strictest privacy settings. Once something is online, it can be copied and redistributed. Therefore, it should be assumed that everything that is written online is permanent and could be shared. All information posted online is subject to Copyright, Data Protection legislation and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
- 5.4 All school employees are reminded that they are bound by the School's Code of Conduct, and teaching staff are further subject to the Teachers' Standards. Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Legislation 2006 school employees may be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the school has significant concerns or suspicions about an employee's conduct or behaviour.
- 5.5 School employees, volunteers and casual workers should at all times:
- Have the highest standards of personal conduct (inside and outside of School)
 - Ensure that their behaviour (inside and outside of School) does not compromise their position within the school
 - Ensure that their judgment and integrity should not be able to be brought into question.
 - Ensure that their relationship with members of the community, via social media, does not compromise their position within the school or bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people.

6.0 Safeguarding Children

- 6.1 Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear professional boundaries. Employees must abide by the agreed method of communication policies within the school. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- 6.2 Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all school employees, volunteers and casual workers. The key principles that must be followed are:
- School employees **must not** communicate, (including accepting 'friend'/follow requests) with any current pupils of the school, or from any other educational establishment, on social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram. This is applicable **even if** there is permission from a pupil's parent/guardian. (This would not apply to school aged pupils that an individual employee is directly related to, e.g. their child, niece or nephew). Employees should not communicate with, including being 'friends' with, past pupils whilst they are below the age of nineteen. The Headteacher should be alerted if they receive any such communication from pupils. Employees should ensure that all their social media account settings require them to authorise or accept people as friends or followers to avoid this occurring without their knowledge or approval.
- 6.3 These principles apply:
- Regardless of whether access occurs during or outside of contracted work hours.
 - To all technology or devices whether provided by the school or personally owned

7.0 Unacceptable use of Social Networking Sites/Applications

- 7.1 Through Social Networking Sites/Applications, employees **must not**:
- Disclose private and/or confidential information relating to pupils, parents, other school employees, their employment directly or the school. This also applies to any other educational establishment that the employee has worked within.
 - Discuss or reveal any matters relating to the school, previous educational establishments, school employees, pupils or parents
 - Publish, share, distribute or comment on any material that may be deemed contrary to British Values*.
 - Identify themselves as a representative of the school online or on their social networking sites
 - Write abusive comments regarding current/previous school employees, governors, current/previous pupils or parents/guardians
 - Harass or bully school employees, persons unrelated or related to the school through cyber bullying and social exclusion
 - View or update their personal site (on Facebook, Twitter etc) during the working day, unless on a designated break. (This includes via a work or personal mobile telephone and/or Ipad).

- By proxy, update their personal site (Facebook, Twitter etc) during their normal working day, and must ensure that their social networking site/application is secure at all times from third parties
- Access or share illegal material
- Publish any content, which may be deemed as defamation or discrimination
- Post any images of pupils from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked
- Without permission, post any images of school employees on social networking sites from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked.
- Set up and/or use an alias social networking account to circumvent the policy
- Breach any of the school's other policies and procedures such as the School's Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy
- Use it as a forum for raising and escalating concerns regarding the school / Trust /Academy or the Council. These concerns should be raised using the Grievance Procedure or the Whistleblowing Procedure.

This list is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the E-mail and Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Conduct..

**British Values are defined as those set out in statutory guidance 'The Prevent Duty' June 2015 and the Governmental advice in 'Improving spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils' November 2014 and within any update to either publication.*