



## Moorlands Primary School



**“Anything is Possible!”**

### **Social Media Policy**

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#### **i) Introduction:**

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. 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.

This policy and associated guidance is here to protect pupils, staff and the school of Moorlands Primary. The use of social networking applications has implications on the duty of safeguarding children, and this policy aims to provide a balance to support social media usage and innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

#### **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.

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” July 2021*

MSN recommend 13 but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on MSN and other social networking applications of a similar nature.

#### **ii) Who is involved in this policy?**

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as ‘school representatives’. Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, for example Blogger Twitter Online discussion forums such as netmums.com and 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 Equality and Diversity Policy.

#### **iii) Use of Social networking by employees.**

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head Teacher. 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. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Moorlands

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.

### **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 school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment 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 affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

#### **iv) Social media usage by Parents/Carers.**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking through this policy and the school's Acceptable Use Policy. Official methods of school communication include the website, newsletters, letters, the school SMS service and verbal discussion. Parents/Carers of children attending Moorlands Primary School are expected to respect the rights of pupils and staff and, in the interest of safeguarding, are expected to meet the following terms and conditions:

- **Parents/Carers are not permitted to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.**
- **Parents/Carers should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.**
- **Parents/Carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.**

Parents/Carers should be clearly aware of this policy which should be available on the school website. Any breach of these conditions means the school is in their right to refer to this policy and request that changes are made to ensure they adhere to the policy. These terms are designed for the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

#### **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. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment
- 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

#### **Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking**

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from Facebook. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is: [http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show\\_form=underage](http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage)

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

All pupil mobile phones must be handed into the teacher at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off.

No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day unless for direct school use (posting school information of the school Facebook page.)

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 the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying

### **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 they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy
- Follow the low level concerns policy if it meets the low level concerns criteria
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO
- 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 LADO 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

### **Cyber Bullying**

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 Facebook or texts. 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 school's 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 school's 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.

If a parent/carer is making threats on-line against a member of school staff – this is counted as bullying. The member of staff must inform the Head Teacher immediately and the parent/carer spoken to. Should the situation not be resolved, the police and LA should be informed.