

# **Social Networking Policy December 2021**

## **Introduction**

This policy provides the acceptable standards for the use of social-networking for all school employees at St Paul's CE Primary School. It applies to all school employees, including volunteers and casual workers. This policy should be read in conjunction with Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Vulnerable People and the E-mail and Acceptable Use Policy.

This policy covers the use of Social Networking Sites and Applications, such as, but not limited to; Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Instagram etc. It further includes: Blogging, online forums or social networking groups.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out clear guidance of the acceptable use of social networking sites
- Ensure confidentiality of the school, staff and pupils is maintained at all times
- Ensure that all school employees understand the consequences of failing to comply with the Social Networking Policy
- Ensure the appropriate use of the schools resources

## **Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body/Headteacher responsibilities**

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

It is the responsibility of both the Governing Body and the Headteacher to take corrective and 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.

### **Employee's responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the school employee to read and comply with the Social Networking Policy. School employees are reminded that they are bound by the School's Code of Conduct and Teaching Staff are further subject to the GTCE Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers. Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Legislation 2006 school employees may be referred to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) where the school has significant concerns or suspicions about an employees conduct or behaviour.

It is with this in mind that all school employees are reminded that:

**Everything posted online is public, even with the strictest privacy settings. Once something is online, it can be copied and redistributed. Therefore, assume that everything that is written is permanent and can be shared.**

School employees are reminded that they 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

Any failure to abide by the Social Networking Policy will result in disciplinary action. School employees must alert the Governing Body and/or Headteacher where a breach of these standards is suspected or known to have occurred. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### **Safeguarding Children**

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Employees must abide by agreed method of communication policies within school. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all school employees. The key principles are:

- School employees **must not** communicate, (including accepting 'friend' requests) with any current pupils of the school on social networking sites such as Facebook. This is applicable **even** if a school employee has permission from a pupil's parent/guardian. (This would not apply to current pupils that an individual employee is directly related to, e.g. their child, niece or nephew). School employees should not communicate with, including being 'friends' with, or follow past pupils whilst they are below the age of nineteen.
- School employees **must not** accept friend requests from parents of pupils. (This would not apply to parents that an individual employee is directly related to, e.g. their brother/sister/cousin).
- The principles apply regardless of whether access occurs during or outside of contracted work hours.
- The principles apply to all technology whether provided by the school or owned by the employee.

### **Unacceptable use of Social Networking Sites/Applications**

Through Social Networking Sites/Applications, school employees **must not**:

- Disclose private and confidential information relating to pupils, parents, other school employees, their employment directly or the school.
- Discuss or reveal any matters relating to the school, school employees, pupils or parents.
- Identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- Write abusive comments regarding school employees, pupils or parents/guardians.
- Harass or bully school employees, persons unrelated or related to the school through cyber bullying and social exclusion.
- Access or share illegal material.
- Publish any content, which may be deemed as defamation or discrimination.
- Post any images of pupils.
- Post any images of school employees on a social networking site before requesting permission
- Set up and/or use an alias social networking account to circumvent the policy.
- Breach any of the schools 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 or the Council. These concerns should be raised using the Whistle Blowing Procedure.

**'Official' School Social Network account use [www.twitter.com/StPaulsCrompton](http://www.twitter.com/StPaulsCrompton)**

The school has an 'official' account on Twitter. Tweets appear directly on the school website. This social networking tool is in place to inform parents/carers, rather than to socialise digitally. The administrators of these site **must** therefore use them as such.

- Access is limited to Staff/Headteacher/Governors (when requested)
- Currently employed staff **must not** 'like' the page, thus giving other users direct access to their own page, however limited.
- Photos posted on the page will only feature children if the parents have given written consent. Pupils should appear unnamed
- Staff should not use direct message.
- If photos feature any members of staff, their permission will be sought before posting.
- Should anything untoward be posted, by parents, ex-pupils or even staff, screenshots will be taken and passed on to Headteacher/Governors.