

DATCHET ST.MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY

Social Media Policy

Policy produced by Headteacher (Date) Jan '18

Signed  Print Name NICOLA GREEN

(Chair Headteacher / Other.....)

Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The two with the widest use are Facebook and Twitter.

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 advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

There are four key areas:

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils outside the school

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils outside the school

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter cannot be accessed in school on the school's computer systems due to filters put in place. Social Media sites used by children outside of school are the responsibility of the parent and not the school but the school will take responsibility in educating children about online safety awareness and online bullying.

Facebook and Instagram are targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds. At Datchet St Mary's we are aware that children will still have access to this social media site and therefore look to educate children of the potential dangers.

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.

- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

Children will be educated on the impact of online bullying through computing lesson, PSHE and safer internet day.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter.

The Governing Body understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (*an individual*) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (*an individual*) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (*an individual's*) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (*an individual in their*) business, trade, office or profession." (National Association of Headteachers)

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