

Social Media Policy including the Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy



Headteacher signature

Chair of Governors' signature

Date

Review date

Introduction to the Policy

The Staff and Governors of Penketh South CP School recognise that many pupils and their families own a mobile phone. We also recognise that some parents/carers request that their children bring a mobile phone to school for before and after school safety/security reasons.

Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by pupils. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. Currently the most frequently used are; Facebook, SKYPE, X-Box Live, Tumblr and Twitter - this list is not exhaustive and school recognises that this is a constantly changing canvas.

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications 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 and mobile devices. 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.

Purpose

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

Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a 'no under 13 year old' 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"

"We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk to their children about safe internet use can be found on this help page"

MSN recommend 13 years but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on MSN and Facebook.

This guidance is to advise and protect staff from accusations of improper relationships with pupils:

SCOPE

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' for brevity. The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the School representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs, for example Blogger
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter

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.

Use of Social networking sites in worktime

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Headteacher.

Social Networking as part of School Service

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 Headteacher first.

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Penketh South Community 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.
- Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

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 years.
- Staff must not initiate friendships with pupils, or pupils' family/friends, under any circumstance.
- Staff who maintain social networking friendships with work colleagues are required to adhere to the requirements below relating to content of interactions.
- Staff must not make reference on social networking sites to the School, its employees, pupils, and their families. If staff adhere to this recommendation then the personal content of an individual's social networking memberships is unlikely to be of concern to the school.
- If individuals feel aggrieved about some aspect of their work or employment, there are appropriate informal and formal channels, internally within the school, which allow staff to raise and progress such matters. Social networks are not the appropriate forum to raise such matters. Employees should discuss any concerns with their head teacher/line manager in the first instance. Guidance is also available from HR and trade unions.
- 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.
- Photos of staff should never be uploaded without that person's express permission.
- Comments about individuals (staff, children, parents or governors) should not be made online at any time.
- Be aware that threads on your Facebook page can be read by others.
- 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.
- School Representatives are advised to check their security profiles and privacy settings on the social networks that they use. If individuals are not clear about how to restrict access to their content, they should regard all content as publicly available and act accordingly.
- In using social networking sites, staff are recommended to only post content that they would wish to be in the public domain. ***Even if content is subsequently removed from a site it may remain available and accessible.*** Staff should consider not only how content could reflect on them, but also on their professionalism and the reputation of the School as their employer.
- Even with privacy settings in place it is still possible that the personal details of staff may be accessed more broadly than the other networkers identified to them. Any reference to such information by pupils and/or their families, which a staff member deems to be inappropriate or is concerned about, should be reported to their line manager in the first instance.
- If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil (or a group of pupils) has made inappropriate/insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they must report this to the Head teacher so that the appropriate process can be followed.

Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.
- 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 a grown up at home or your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

Comments posted by Parent/Carers

Parent and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion.

- Parents are not expected to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.
- 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.

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 as detailed above they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy.
- 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

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Penketh South Community Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social; networking sites. 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. 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 schools 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 schools 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.

Safeguarding of Children

Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records. ***Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their records during the school day.***

- Under the data protection act of 1988 school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders. Photographs will be stored on the school network which is password protected until the school ceases to operate, this is occur then all photograph's will be shredded or deleted from the school network.

- Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and learning and displayed in school and in albums or a child's development records for children and parent carers, governors, OFSTED, LA officers to look through.
- Often photographs may contain other children in the background.
- School Performances may be recorded by video and photographs by staff or by an organisation engaged to do so by the school.
- Parent/carers must not record during school performances as this causes distraction to both pupils and the audience. Photograph opportunities are provided at the end of school performances.
- Events such as Sports Day, outings, and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending. Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites (as detailed in the home-school-pupil agreement).
- On occasion the school might like to use the photographs of children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote the school via the website etc., however in this instance; specific parental permission may be required.
- Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school. ***Visitors may only use their phones in the foyer or outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.***
- The use of camera and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets.
- All school cameras and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.
- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode.
- Mobile phone use is not permitted during teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings.
- If a member of staff is found taking photographs or recording video footage with a mobile phone and uploading images or video onto the internet, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the schools Disciplinary Policy.
- Staff are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure that you are reached quickly. The office number is telephone number 01925 726558.
- All staff will be asked to sign to say that they have read and understood this policy through the Staff Code of Conduct.

Pupils

- We recommend that pupils do not bring mobile phones to school unless they are walking home alone at the end of the school day.
- Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way. Telephone number 01925 726558.
- Pupils are not to take photos of other pupils or staff or record video footage with a mobile phone whilst in school.

Consequences

If pupils fail to follow these guidelines the following consequences may be applied:

- Confiscation of the mobile phone (handed back to student or parent at the end of the day).
- Communication with parents/carers regarding mobile phone use at school.
- If images of other pupils or school staff have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the student until the images have been removed by the student in the presence of a teacher and their parents will be spoken to immediately.
- A student being banned from bringing a mobile phone onto the school grounds.

This policy supports the school's Safeguarding Policy. It has been endorsed by the *Governors* and will be monitored, reviewed and amended as required.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person.