

policy SOCIAL MEDIA

What is Social Media? For the purpose of this policy, social media is the term commonly used for websites that allow people to interact with each other in some way - by sharing information, photos, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social networking websites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are only a few of the social media services currently being used. This definition of social media is continually changing as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day.

RATIONALE

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

AIMS

- To ensure that the school is not exposed to legal risks.
- To ensure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected.
- To ensure that our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.
- To ensure that the whole school community are aware of the legal requirements of social media sites:

For example: Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have no under 13 years registration and recommend parental guidance for 13—16 year olds. The following are extracts from the Facebook privacy policy:

"If you are under the age of 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 information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have information from a child under age 13, please contact us."

"We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet practices.."

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF ON USING SOCIAL NETWORKING:

- Members of staff should not interact with any student enrolled in the school on social networking sites.
- Members of staff should not interact with any ex-student of the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18.
- This means that no member of staff should request access to a student on any social networking site. This includes not permitting the student access to the staff member's area eg: by accepting them as a friend.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS ON USING SOCIAL NETWORKING:

- Students under 13 should not be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where students can be reported via the Help screen.
- Students can not access social networking sites during the school working day.
- All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day and collected upon leaving the school premises.
- Student's should not attempt to join a staff member's area on social networking sites. If a student attempts to do this, the member of staff must inform the Principal and parents will be contacted.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- We have zero tolerance for cyber bullying.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA ON SCHOOL PREMISIS:

School equipment may only be used to access and post to social media by official users or as part of any approved curriculum activities.

policy SOCIAL MEDIA

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE:

- Parents should be clearly aware of the guidelines for student access to social media both in and out of school time.
- Where disclosure of inappropriate use is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even when originated outside of school hours.

This can be a complex area and these examples might help:

- A child under the age of 13 is receiving taunts from peers. This is occurring during weekends using Facebook. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families. However they are fully within their rights to warn all of 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 the use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and the perpetrators had failed to follow the school's recommendation. They could then deal with the residual incident, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.
- Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be done under the guidance of the school's welfare and wellbeing policy.
- If a child under the age of 13 receives taunts from an ex-student who has left the school this is not seen to be a school responsibility.

The Education and Policy Subcommittee will meet to monitor the effectiveness of the school policy and procedures.