

WOODLANDS INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Policy Co-ordinator	Headteacher
Original Policy Dated	June 2017
Review Date	September 2018
Other Relevant Documents	
Presented to Governors	
Date to be Reviewed	September 2019

Woodlands Infant and Nursery School

Social Media Policy

This policy sets out Woodlands Infant and Nursery School's policy on social networking. Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. Woodlands Infant and Nursery School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by children and how social media/mobile phones are to be used by, governors, visitors, volunteers and school staff at Woodlands Infant and Nursery school. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four key areas:

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within 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 children within 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. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate. Social Media sites to be used in school include blogging sites and Twitter. Parents will give permission for children to access these sites in school as well as permission for images of their child / child's work to be included on the site. (See Parent Permission Response Form).

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child, it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are **not permitted** to be registered, including Facebook.

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.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. It is expected that

in these circumstances staff will always advise the Headteacher of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed. The Headteacher will in turn seek advice from Lincolnshire County Council where appropriate.

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, children, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body. Staff need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, children or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, or Lincolnshire County Council could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might put the school into disrepute.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson or work time (for personal use).
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality. Staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for children or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Executive Headteacher in the first instance and any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence.

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 regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

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.

Review of Policy

Due to the ever changing nature of information and communication technologies it is best practice that this policy be reviewed annually.