



SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

VERSION 2

REVIEWED: October 2016
REVIEW DATE: October 2018

Imagine, Believe, Achieve

1. Introduction

Matlock Bath Holy Trinity CofE Primary School is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites.

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 and integrity.

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. Online safety is a Safeguarding issue and this policy must be read in accordance with the school's online safety policy.

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

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- the school is not exposed to legal risks
- the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school

Facebook is targeted and older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 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 information from a child under age 13, please contact us."

"We strongly recommend that minors 13 years and 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 self Internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk to their children about safe Internet use can be found on this help page".

3. Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders including employees, Governors, PTFA and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as “school representatives” for brevity.

The requirements of this policy apply to all users 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
- Online discussion forums, such as Netmums
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services, such as You Tube
- “Micro-blogging” applications, such as 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.

4. Use of social networking sites in work time

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use is not permitted.

5. 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 a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher first.

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school service (for example, contributing towards 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 in this 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. Matlock Bath Holy Trinity C of E (Controlled) 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.

6. 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 representatives of the school
- Reference 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 gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

7. Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking applications

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil on social networking sites.
- No member of staff should interact with any ex pupil of the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18.
- This means that no member of school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil to access the staff members' area, for example 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.

- 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 applications in the working day on school equipment, please contact the named Child Protection person in school.

8. Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking applications

- 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.
- All mobile phones must be handed into the KS2 teachers at the beginning of the day and the Internet capability must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using the mobile phone.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's area 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 applications at any time of the 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 your class teacher, in confidence, as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber-bullying.

9. Child protection guidance

If the Head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking application in an inappropriate manner as detailed above, they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their Child Protection Policy.
- Refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate via Derbyshire Police Child Protection Team.
- 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. Refer to Whistleblowing policy.
- 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.

10. Cyber-bullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking applications on school premises, Matlock Bath Holy Trinity C of E (Controlled) Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber-bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the schools' policy of access to social networking applications.

Where a disclosure of cyber-bullying is made, schools have a duty to investigate and protect, even where the cyber-bullying originates from outside the school. This is done in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Once disclosure has been made, investigation will have to involve the families. This will be dealt with under the school's Anti Bullying Policy.

If parents/carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the policy as harassment.

This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber-bullying.

Signed:

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Date:

Review date: October 2018