



# West Ashtead Primary School

## Social Media Policy

### Introduction

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. This gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff. It will also provide guidance for parents.

### The use of social networking sites by pupils 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 e.g. blogging applications are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

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 and Instagram to name two. Sites which have an age limit higher than the age of the children will never be used in school.

### Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is probable 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** post information or opinions about West Ashtead School or pictures of school events.
- 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.

### Inappropriate use of Social Media by the wider school community

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking.

In the highly unlikely event of inappropriate comments or images being shared by parents then the school will:

- Attempt to establish a respectful dialogue with the parties involved
- Follow the steps set out published in the Code of Conduct for parents asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels (appendix 1)

## **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.

The school 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."

## **Digital Images and Social Media**

- Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending.
- Staff must never post, link to or re-post/ re-tweet images of children from school.
- Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites.
- **Staff, visiting professionals, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their own records during the school day.**

Please see the Pupil Images policy for more information about how images of children are recorded, stored and shared.

## **Safeguarding and Policy Enforcement**

If a member of staff is made aware of any other inappropriate communications involving any child they must report it immediately to the Headteacher and Safeguarding Officer. If a member of staff has been found to have posted any material on a social networking application which contradicts the principles above they will be asked to remove the offending content immediately. Any communications or content published by staff that causes damage to the School, Local Authority, any of its employees or any third party's reputation may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct to which the School and Local Authority Dismissal and Disciplinary Policies apply.

Agreed with Staff: February 2019

Agreed with Governors: February 2019

Review: Autumn 2019