

**ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**Barleyfields Road, Wetherby  
West Yorkshire LS22 6PR**

**SOCIAL NETWORKING  
POLICY**

***'This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all our children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment'***

Reviewed and approved  
Next Review

- March 2021  
- March 2023

## **Social Networking Policy**

### **St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Wetherby**

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#### **1. Introduction**

##### **1.1 Objectives**

1.1.1 This policy sets out the policy of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School on social networking and it aims to:

**Assist schools' staff working with children to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice.**

**Set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use.**

**Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken.**

**Support safer working practice in order to protect and safeguard children.**

**Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils.**

**Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.**

1.1.2 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 in schools will always advise the Head Teacher of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

1.1.3 This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to social networking in addition to the legal obligations of the Governing Body and the relevant legislation.

##### **1.2 Scope**

1.2.1 This document applies to all Staff who work at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School and this definition of "Staff" includes teachers, support staff, supply staff, governors, contractors and volunteers.

1.2.2 It should be followed by any adult whose work brings them into contact with pupils. References to Staff should be taken to apply to all the above groups of people in School. Reference to pupils means all pupils at School.

1.2.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with other School policies but should not be used to address issues where other policies and procedures exist to deal with them.

## **1.3 Principles**

- 1.3.1 Adults who work with pupils are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- 1.3.2 Staff in school should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- 1.3.3 Staff in school should continually monitor and review their practice in terms of the continually evolving world of social networking and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

## **2. Safer Social Media Practice in Schools**

### **2.1 What is social media?**

- 2.1.1 For the purpose of this policy, social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social networking websites such as Face book, snapchat & Twitter are perhaps the most well known examples of social media but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, video and audio podcasts, wikis, message boards, photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube and micro blogging services such as Twitter. This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day. Children are taught the age restrictions for social media sites. Children will not access or contribute to these sites within school.
- 2.1.2 For the purpose of this document the terminology Social Media is not exhaustive and also applies to the use of communication technologies such as mobile phones, cameras, PDAs / PSPs or other handheld devices and any other emerging forms of communications technologies.
- 2.1.3 Mathletics and Spellodrome are used within school and at home for homework tasks. Children are taught to use the safer social media teaching whilst using these sites.

### **2.2 Overview and expectations**

- 2.2.1 All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils or students, public in general and all those with whom they work in line with the School's code of conduct. Adults in contact with pupils should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.
- 2.2.2 The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of School Staff who work with pupils. Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.2.3 School Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies,

which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

## **2.3 Safer online behaviour**

- 2.3.1 Managing personal information effectively makes it far less likely that information will be misused.
- 2.3.2 In their own interests, 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 pupils or their families or friends having access to Staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.
- 2.3.3 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.
- 2.3.4 Staff should never 'friend' a pupil at the School, past or present where they are working onto their social networking site and must work within the Professional Conduct set out in the teacher standards and Safeguarding Policy.
- 2.3.5 Staff should never use or access social networking sites of pupils and should never accept an invitation to 'friend' a pupil.
- 2.3.6 Confidentiality needs to be considered at all times. Social networking sites have the potential to discuss inappropriate information and Staff must ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about themselves, the School, their colleagues, pupils or members of the public. In this regard all Staff must ensure that they do not use the School's name, logo or other published material without the prior written permission of the Head Teacher.
- 2.3.7 Staff need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for damage to the reputation of the school or be considered defamatory. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other members of Staff, pupils or other individuals connected with the School, or another school could result in formal action being taken against them.
- 2.3.8 Staff are also reminded that they must comply with the requirements of equalities legislation in their on-line communications.
- 2.3.9 Staff must never post derogatory remarks or offensive comments on-line or engage in on-line activities which may bring the School into disrepute.
- 2.3.10 **Cyber Bullying**

If a parent/carer is making threats on-line against a member of school staff – this is counted as bullying. The member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately and the parent/carer spoken to. Should the situation not be resolved, the police and LA should be informed.

## **2.4 Protection of personal information**

- 2.4.1 Staff should ensure that they do not use School ICT equipment for personal use, e.g. cameras or computers. They will also not use personal equipment in school e.g. personal cameras, mobile phones.
- 2.4.2 Staff should never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people.
- 2.4.3 Staff should not give their personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents. Where there is a need for homework to be sent electronically or other communication is needed, the school office e-mail address should be used.
- 2.4.4 Staff are advised to understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.
- 2.4.5 No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at anytime of day unless for direct school use.

## **2.5 Communication between pupils / Staff**

- 2.5.1 Communication between pupils and Staff, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.
- 2.5.2 This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- 2.5.3 Staff should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
- 2.5.4 Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. They should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' in the context of sexual offending.
- 2.5.5 Staff should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers.
- 2.5.6 E-mail or text communications between an adult and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.

## **2.6 Social contact**

- 2.6.1 Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact via social media / other communication technologies with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship.
- 2.6.2 There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and Staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.
- 2.6.3 There must be awareness on the part of those working with pupils that some social networking contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge, can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process. This can also apply to social

networking contacts made through outside interests or through the staff member's own family.

- 2.6.4 As part of the computing curriculum pupils may have the opportunity to contribute to a closed blog for education purposes. This may include responding to teacher comments or an online question. The teacher will have overall responsibility for what is posted online as it will be password protected and the teacher must authorise each comment.

### **3. Review of policy**

- 3.1 Due to the ever changing nature of information and communication technologies it is best practice that this policy be reviewed annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments in the use of technologies, new threats to e-safety or incidents that have taken place.