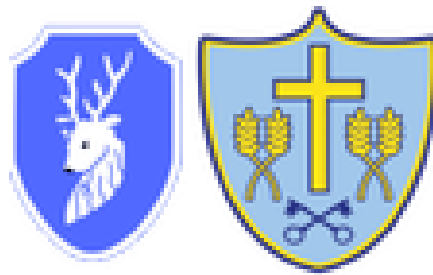


# The Federation of St. Peter's Elwick CofE (VA) and Hart Community Primary Schools

**'Always Our Best'**



## **Social Media Policy**

**Prepared by: S. Leighton (Computing Lead)**

**Agreed by: Governing Body**

**Review Date: October 2017**

**Signed, Chair of Governors: Colin Reid**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Reid', written over a horizontal line.

**Date: November 2016**

## Rationale

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting 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 duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. An effective approach to online safety ensures we protect and educate our whole school community. Further details can be found in our Child Protection policy.

The Federation of St. Peter's Elwick CEVA And Hart Community Primary Schools is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites have become a very significant part of life for many people. They provide a positive way to keep in touch with friends and colleagues, and can be used to exchange ideas and thoughts on common interests. Examples of such sites include, but are not limited to, blogs (short for web log), Twitter, Google Plus, Flickr, MySpace, Facebook, Instagram, Bebo, YouTube, Windows Live Spaces, MSN, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chat rooms and instant messenger', this list however is by no means exhaustive.

## Scope, Purpose and Aims

Staff must keep a professional distance from pupils and there should be a clear separation of the private social lives of staff and that of pupils. There is no need for social networking to go on between staff and pupils and there is no clear educational benefit. Staff should also ensure that their relationships and interactions with colleagues when using social networking sites remain appropriate and professional.

It is important that staff are able to use technologies and services effectively and flexibly whilst ensuring that they do not make themselves vulnerable. However, it is also important to ensure that this is balanced with the schools duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site. Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of staff 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 Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Safeguard all children
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

#### The policy aims to:

- Enable pupils and employees to use social networking sites safely and securely.
- Ensure that pupils and employees are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites.
- Safeguard pupils and employees in connection with the use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable.
- Ensure The Federation of St Peter's Elwick CEVA and Hart Community Schools maintains its duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

Should be read in conjunction with Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sep 2016), E safety policy, Acceptable User Agreement, Behaviour Policy

#### Legislation

The following legislation must be considered when adhering to this policy:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)
- Equality Act 2010

#### Responsibilities

##### The Governing Body, Head Teacher and Computing Leader

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that deal with the use of social networking sites;
- Ensure that all employees have access to this policy and that new employees are made aware of it.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of all related policies
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##### Head Teacher

- Be familiar with this policy and guidelines and ensure that employees understand the policy and their own responsibilities.
- Take responsibility for ensuring that all new employees are made aware of the policy when they commence their employment.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of the inappropriate use of them.
- Instigate disciplinary procedures where appropriate to do so; Seek advice where necessary from Human Resources on the approach to be adopted if they are made aware of any potential issue.
- Be familiar with the Schools' Internet Policy and ensure that employees understand the

policy and their own responsibilities.

- Ensure that their own personal conduct and interaction with other colleagues when using social networking sites remains appropriate and sets a positive example to other staff at all times.
- Ensure staff are aware that if any instances of the alleged inappropriate use of social networking sites are brought to the attention of the Headteacher, the disciplinary procedure will apply.

#### Staff shall:

- Behave responsibly and professionally at all times in connection with the use of social networking sites.
- Co-operate with management in ensuring the implementation of this policy.
- Be responsible for all contents/ comments on their own site.
- Ensure all security settings are set at an appropriate level.
- Be familiar with the Schools' Internet & E-mail Policy.
- Ensure that caution is exercised when accessing sites to ensure that Network Security is not compromised
- Carry out safeguarding of all pupils, including educating them to safeguard them against the dangers and risks associated with social media

There may be instances where the School or Local Authority will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour for which there are concerns as to its legality.

#### Use of Social Media

For employees' own security all communication via social networking sites should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore advised that staff follow the following procedures:

#### Personal use of social media

- Staff must not accept pupils as friends – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff vulnerable to allegations.
- Staff must not be friends with recent pupils. The potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking.
- Staff should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space.
- Staff should not post inappropriate or indecent remarks.
- Staff should not post any comments relating to individuals connected to their role in school, including pupils, parents, staff, colleagues, other professionals
- If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil, or becomes exposed to any information that relates to the School or another member of staff, they must report it to the designated safeguarding lead and contact the internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Staff should not write about their place of work/ colleagues and pupils. Should a member of staff do so he/she will be in breach of this policy.
- Staff are responsible for moderating the comments made on their 'posts' by family, friends or 'followers' and these should adhere to the guidelines set out in this policy. If a 'follower', friend or family member comments about work then it is the responsibility of the member of staff to have the comment removed as soon as they are aware of it.
- Staff must not disclose information or work such as lesson plans, presentations, project

- work etc. that could be considered to be the intellectual property of the school
- Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
  - Staff must not disclose any information about the school/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena.
  - In no circumstances should staff post photographs of pupils on personal social media accounts
  - Staff should not make defamatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute.
  - Staff should not disclose confidential information relating to his/her employment at the school or indicate any political allegiances.
  - Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive, derogatory or inappropriate to others.
  - Staff should not post information or comments, or engage in any discussions that could be interpreted as bullying, harassment or discrimination of any description.
  - Staff should not join any online groups that could be considered to condone or promote inappropriate behaviours or post inappropriate content.
  - Members of the school staff are expected to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
  - All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
  - Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.

#### Breaches of the Policy

The Federation of St Peter's Elwick CofE (VA) and Hart Primary Community School does not discourage staff from using social networking sites and appreciates that there may be occasions where such sites can be used as an effective business tool. However, all staff should be aware that the Federation will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. If occasions arise of what could be deemed to be online bullying, harassment, defamation or misconduct of any description, these will be dealt with in the same way as other such instances occurring "offline".

Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Headteacher can exercise his/her right to monitor the use of the school's information systems and internet access where he/she believes unauthorised use may be taking place; to ensure compliance with regulatory practices; to ensure standards of service are maintained; to prevent or detect crime; to protect the communication system and to pick up messages when someone is away from school. If any such monitoring detects the unauthorised use of social networking sites disciplinary action will be taken.

(Staff may wish to refer to the relevant Disciplinary Policy in place within the School/LA)

Policy Reviewed: November 2016

Next review date: October 2017