

# THE STOKE POGES SCHOOL

## Social Media Policy

<b>Governors Committee Responsible for the Policy</b>	Finance, Pay and Personnel Committee
<b>Date Approved</b>	September 2020
<b>Recommended Review Period</b>	Two years
<b>Date for Review</b>	September 2022
<b>Person Responsible for the Policy</b>	Headteacher

### Introduction

The 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 application 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 appropriate use. This policy and associated guidance are to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, the use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

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

### Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders which include employees, Governors, parents/carers and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives'. The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purposes 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, for example Blogger, Twitter, online discussion forums such as netmums.com, collaborative spaces, such as Facebook, media sharing services, for example YouTube.

### 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 by a third party) must be approved by the Headteacher first.

### Social Networking applications that are used by either parents, staff and governors or on behalf of the school:

- 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 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 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.
- Must not include images (photos or videos) of pupils other than their own children unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured.
- Must not be used to post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.

- Employees and governors should not identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- 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 as serious misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

**Parents/Carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints with the school rather than posting them on social media.**

#### **Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking**

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school 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.
- No member of staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking sites. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area, e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted. Unless permission has been given by the Headteacher.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Safeguarding Designated Lead (Liz Astley).

#### **Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking**

- 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; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is:  
[http://www.facebook.com.help/contact.php?show\\_form=underage](http://www.facebook.com.help/contact.php?show_form=underage)
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day, whether via school computers or phone.

Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

#### **Cyber Bullying**

We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying. Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school. This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

- A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and texts from an ex-pupil who moved three months ago; this is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using texts. The pupils are in the school: the school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as the pupils attend the school.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. This is a tricky one. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, the school is also fully within its rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that parents are thereby condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. If any further referral is made to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the school's recommendation. The school could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.
- Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti-bullying policy.
- If parent/carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment.

This guidance refers to the use of texts and mobile phones for cyber bullying.

<b>Headteacher</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Chair of Governing Board</b>		<b>Date</b>	