

Newport CE Junior School Social Media Policy

"Learning to Make a Difference"
September 2016

What is Social Media?

'Social media' is the term commonly given to internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks and encouraging participation and engagement'.

[Chartered Institute of Public Relations Social Media Panel]

For the purposes of this policy social media includes the use of both **external** facing channels such as 'twitter, facebook, snapchat, gaming forums on games consoles, etc and **internal** channels such as discussion forums, Sharepoint, blogs, etc. The same standards apply to both external and internal channels.

Why do we need a Social Media Policy?

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are provided with clear guidance on what is **acceptable** and what is **not acceptable** when using social media.

The same rules that apply to your actions in general, as found in the Employee Code of Conduct, apply to your conduct online.

The council respects the rights of employees and, by and large, what you do in your own time is your concern. However, actions in or outside of work that affect your work performance, the work of others, or the council's interests are a suitable focus for council policy.

The lines between public and private, personal and professional use are hazy in online social networks. This policy covers the responsibilities of employees both inside and outside of work.

Staff use of social media for work purposes:

Anyone wishing to use Social Media for day-to-day-teaching purposes must obtain specific, written permission from the Headteacher.

- For the school's protection as well as your own, it is critical that you stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply.
- Be aware that content on social media websites may be subject to Freedom of Information requests.
- Ensure you strike the right balance and that social media doesn't impact on your performance in relation to other priority areas of work required as part of your day job.

Using social media for personal use:

When employees use social media for personal use, either at work or in a personal capacity, the personal image you project in social media may adversely reflect on the image of the school and the Local Authority.

Personal use at work is only permitted in non-work hours, e.g. before contact time starts, (prior to 8:50am), in your lunch break, or after school finishes (after 3.30pm).

When using social media for personal purposes, you must not imply you are speaking for the school or Telford & Wrekin Council. Avoid use of your School e-mail address, logos or other council identification. Make it clear that what you say is representative of your personal views only. You need to be aware of your association with the council and that some readers may interpret your postings to be school or Council opinion. This includes posting on any opinions you may have in respect to work colleagues, events, parents and pupils.

If you choose to identify yourself as a school / Council employee within a social network, show yourself in the best possible light and remember that you are now connected to your colleagues, managers and members of the public who may also be employees of the Council or teaching profession. You should therefore ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work as an employee.

Think twice. You should use mature discretion in all personal communications in social media.

Know your obligations. You must comply with other policies when using social media. For example, you should be careful not to breach confidentiality.

Show respect to all. You should be respectful of the school, pupils, parents, the local authority, the general public and your fellow employees.

Don't post any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages. If employees are found to be posting such information you may face misconduct/gross misconduct action in accordance with the council's disciplinary process.

Be aware that your profile information is now in the public domain and if completed with your employment details, e.g. work for Telford and Wrekin Council... could attract unwanted contacts or requests for views that are not appropriate

Objectives

This policy sets out Newport CE Junior School's policy on social networking. We have a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of our work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

Key Principles

- Everyone at Newport CE Junior School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.
- It is important to protect everyone at Newport CE Junior School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at Newport CE Junior School considers this and acts responsibly, if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.
- This policy relates to social networking outside work when using school equipment. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work or at home using school equipment is not permitted, unless for professional purposes and authorised by the Headteacher.

Aims

- To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, friends and volunteers at Newport CE Junior School's School with respect to social networking.
- To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Overview and Expectations

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, children, public in general and all those with whom they work.

Adults in contact with children should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.

The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of the schools' staff who are working with children. 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.

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.

Code of Conduct : Social Networking

Under no circumstances should staff make reference to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity/event.

The following are also **not considered acceptable** at Newport CE Junior School:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

In addition to the above, everyone at Newport CE Junior School must ensure that they:

- Communicate with children and staff in an open and transparent way using the school phone number and email address.
- **Never 'friend' a pupil, or parent of a pupil at the school where they are working onto their social networking site.**
- Never use or access social networking sites of children and should never accept an invitation to 'friend' a pupil.
- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal nor professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.
- The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

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 will always advise the Headteacher of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed. The Headteacher will in turn seek

advice from Telford & Wrekin Council where appropriate. This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to social networking in addition to the legal obligations of governing bodies and the relevant legislation.

Safer Online Behaviour

Some social networking sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. **If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work. In some circumstances this could damage the reputation of the school, the profession or the local authority.**

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 children 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.

All staff who already have already 'friended' pupils, former pupils, families with pupils at the school should declare such contacts immediately to the Headteacher. Clearly, it may be such that former pupils at the school or families within Newport and its surrounding communities are known to a member of staff personally. These associations must be declared, to avoid potential problems in the future.

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.

Employees need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, children or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, or Telford and Wrekin Council could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might put the school into disrepute.

Mobile Phones/Camera/Video Recorder Usage

To ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care personal mobile phones, cameras and video recorders must not be used when children are present.

- All mobile phones must be kept in a secure place (not in a pocket), switched off and not be accessed throughout contact time with the children.
- In exceptional circumstances, which have been discussed and agreed with a member of the leadership team, staff may keep their phone switched on and accessible as long as they use their phone out of view of children, i.e. in a room designated for staff, e.g. the staff room or an office.
- During school visits mobile phones should be used away from the children and for emergency purposes only.
- Photographs or images of any children within our care may only be taken following parental consent and only using one of the school cameras / ipads. These images should remain within this setting or be shared only with the parents of the child concerned.
- Personal mobiles, cameras or video recorders cannot be used to record classroom activities. ONLY school property can be used for this.

- School photographs and recordings can only be transferred to, and stored on a school computer.

Protection of Personal Information

Staff should not give their personal e-mail addresses to children or parents. Where there is a need for communication to be sent electronically the school e-mail address should be used. Likewise staff should keep their personal phone numbers private and not use their own mobile phones to contact children or parents in a professional capacity.

There will be occasions when there are social contacts between children and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle or staff are transport escorts. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Staff have a responsibility to make any such contact known to the senior leadership team.

Staff should never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people.

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Staff who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children are illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children, if proven.

Staff should not use equipment belonging to their school/service to access any pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.

Where indecent images of children are found by staff, the police should be immediately informed. Schools should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

Where other unsuitable material is found, which may not be illegal but which raises concerns about that member of staff, Telford & Wrekin Council should be informed and advice sought. The school should not attempt to investigate or evaluate the material themselves until such advice is received.

Cyberbullying

Newport CE Junior School's definition of cyberbullying is:

'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them, often, but not always, over sustained periods of time.'

In order to reduce the potential for cyberbullying children are not allowed to bring phones into the classroom.

Prevention activities are key to ensuring that staff are protected from the potential threat of cyberbullying. All employees are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the potential threat of cyberbullying. Following the advice contained in this guidance should reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands.

If cyberbullying does take place, employees should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. Employees are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site. The whole incident should be reported to the designated person and recorded, using the E-safety incident-logging form, in accordance with the School's E-Safety Policy.

All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

Link with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Schools' Computing Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

All employees must adhere to, and apply the principles of the policy in all aspects of their work. Failure to do so may lead to action being taken under the disciplinary procedure.

Review of Policy

Due to the ever changing nature of information and communication technologies it is best practice that this policy be reviewed annually.

This policy was adopted by the Governing Body on:	Date:
Chair of Governing Body:	
Headteacher:	
Date of Policy Review:	