

# Social Media Policy

## Introduction to the Policy

St. Philomena's School recognises that many staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils use the internet for personal purposes and that they may participate in social networking on social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc. Whilst staff, governors, parents and carers are free to use the internet in this way, they must ensure that they do not breach the law or disclose St. Philomena's School's confidential information, breach copyright, defame the school, its staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the school is not exposed to legal risks and that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected.

The policy outlines the responsibilities of staff, governors, parents and carers setting up personal websites and blogs and using social networking websites.

This policy covers (but is not limited to) the following social media channels:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Personal Blogs

The scope of this policy applies to the following people:

- Governors & Volunteers
- Employees
- Contractors
- Parents/Carers
- Pupils

All Governors, staff, Volunteers and parents 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.

## Social Networking applications

- 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 for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.
- Must not breach the school's Code of Conduct, Equal Opportunities, Internet, Anti-bullying and Positive Behaviour and Discipline policies.
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.
- Detrimental references should not be made to any staff member, pupil or parent.
- 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 gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

#### **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 in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18.
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.

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

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

#### **Cyber Bullying**

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, St Philomena's School protects itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

#### **Guidance/protection for Parents and Carers on using social networking**

Be cautious on how you discuss the school in conversations on Social media. Do not reveal:

- The names of staff members/volunteers working at the school, or anything else that could reveal their identities.
- The names of other children and their parents/carers who attend the school or anything else that could reveal their identities.

If you have any negative opinions or concerns about any aspect of how the school is run, do not discuss it on social media. Such concerns should always be reported to the Headteacher so that they can be investigated, discussed and resolved formally.

If any opinions are discussed on social media which result in any detrimental effect on the school, its employees, its children or its parents/carers, the school will follow formal proceedings to investigate.

If you become aware of any conversation taking place on social media about St Philomena's School and the tone of that conversation is critical of individual staff members or of the school, then it must be reported to the Headteacher for investigation.

Any photographs taken at the school's special events are for personal use only and only parents may put photographs of their own child onto any social media channel. Doing otherwise constitutes a serious safeguarding issue and will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection (Safeguarding) policy. Parents should read the School's Code of Conduct Policy on the website.

*(March 2018 – to be reviewed March 2021)*