

St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Social Media Policy

Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites, including but not limited to: Facebook and Instagram.

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications 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 our personal and professional reputation and that of the school.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. This policy covers the use of social networking by all school stakeholders.

The policy is in place 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 or legal action will be taken
- Support safer working practice
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations being made against adults who work with pupils
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused

Social Media Applications

These include but are not limited to:

- Blogs, for example Blogger
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative space, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services, for example Youtube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter
- Instant messaging services, for example WhatsApp.

Social Media

As a school we fully recognise that social media and networking are playing an increasing role within every-day life and that many staff, parents and children are users of tools such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs; using these for both personal and professional use. We will ensure that staff are kept fully aware of risks and issues that may arise and ways in which to minimise these risks.

We will also ensure that parents are fully aware of how to minimise the risk if their children are using these sites. As a school, we do reserve the right to contact sites such as Facebook and ask them to remove our pupil's accounts should any issues, such as bullying, occur.

Terms of Use

Staff Expectations:

- Not use social networking applications in work time for personal use, unless permission has been given by the Head Teacher/Computing coordinator.
- Review their social networking settings to ensure privacy settings are appropriate and that information available publicly is accurate and appropriate. This also includes photos, or other material, that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if published outside of the site.
- Ensure that their profile/posts are kept private to friends where possible, this also includes personal information such as phone numbers, email addresses etc.
- Not accept current or ex-pupils as 'friends' on social media sites such as Facebook. This is to prevent any possible misinterpretation.
- We do understand that some staff members have friends within the local community, including parents, and ask that members of staff take extra precaution when posting online, including photos, comments and posts which could be misconstrued by others and reflect in an unprofessional manner on the individual or school.
- Ensure that if their communication is fully public (e.g. blogs/Twitter), that they maintain their professionalism at all times and remember that they are a representative of the school.
- Be aware that electronic texts can sometimes be misinterpreted or misconstrued so should endeavour to minimise the possibility of this happening.
- Not use social media to discuss confidential information or to discuss specific pupils or the school.
- Check with the Online Safety and Computing Coordinator if they need advice on monitoring their online persona and checking their security settings.
- Understand that use of social networking sites can present dangers to the user but by following this guidance these are limited.

- If a pupil attempts to join a staff member's area on networking sites, then the member of staff is to inform the Head Teacher and parents will be informed of this happening (see below).

Pupil Expectations:

- No pupil may access social networking sites at St Lawrence Junior School during the school day.
- No pupil should attempt to join a member of staff's social networking site. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head Teacher. Pupils will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites within the school day.

Reviewed: September 2022

Next Review Date: September 2025