Spalding Monkshouse Primary School

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Review Date: APRIL 2019

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. 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 reputation.

This gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Monkshouse Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four key areas:

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity
C. Comments posted by parents/carers
D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

The school's Acceptable Use Policy outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two.

No pupil may access social networking sites during the school day.

All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the start of the school day.

No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's area on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.

No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.

We teach rules, laws, safe use, what to do when we are concerned and appropriate behaviour on the internet, through both age specific curriculum lessons and generally in safety themed Collective Worships and through E-Safety workshops. We also have digital leaders to support the children in the safe use of technology.

The computing curriculum provides opportunities for the children to be reminded of their 'digital footprints' as well as their responsibilities online and where to report concerns.

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner. In school filters have been set to block most websites categorised as 'Social Networking', if a site is required a request must be made directly to the headteacher.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add current pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts
- Staff are **advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body or any 'school business'.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Parents/carers must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event. Parents/carers area asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

If it is viewed a parent posts something illegal and the school is informed, it will report this through the appropriate channels, which may include police or social services.

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll. Any incidents of bullying or e-safety concerns are documented and reported to Governors via the Headteacher's report.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the parent will be asked to remove such comments and affected parties could seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

"There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written…which:

- Expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- Cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- Lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society
- Or disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession."
  (National Association of Headteachers)

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school

Complaints Procedure

If a parent/carer or member of staff has any concerns or complaints with regard to social media, an appointment can be made with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will investigate the complaint and if necessary will be able to advise on formal procedures for complaint.

Signed_____Chair of Governors

Signed_____ Headteacher

Date_____