

South Failsworth Primary School

‘Inspiring and Creating Lifelong Learners’



Social Media Policy

Approved by the Governing Body: June 2021

Review date: June 2023

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies relating to social media - specifically the school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable internet use policy.

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy 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 South Failsworth Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Twitter, MSN, Youtube, Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, Microblogging applications.

There are four key areas regarding social media and networking:

- 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 (AUP) within the school's Online Safety Policy outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites are not used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff will carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate. Social Media sites to be used in school include Facebook and Twitter. An example of this would be tweeting an author in response to studying their work.

The school has its own Facebook page, which may be shared with pupils when relevant to their learning. Images of pupils and their work are included on this site for those pupils whose parents have given permission (see consent form).

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. Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate. The way in which school staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the school and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents of the school. In their use of social

networking sites, staff should be aware that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 18) or allow pupils to 'follow' their accounts e.g. Instagram. Staff must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil, whether from South Failsworth Primary School or any other school, unless the pupils are family members.
- Staff are **strongly advised not** to add parents as 'friends' or 'followers' into their personal accounts.
- Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of South Failsworth Primary School or the Local Authority in personal social media as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the school.
- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff members must not represent their own personal views as those of the school.
- 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.

Where the school uses email and learning platforms e.g. Seesaw to communicate with pupils e.g. regarding online learning or homework, the guidance detailed in the online safety policy should be followed (pages 13-15).

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking (see parents letter – Appendix A). 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 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 should make complaints through official school channels 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.

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

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Headteacher will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter.

The Governing Body understands that, "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)

APPENDIX A

Dear families,

Parental communication via social media

On behalf of all school staff and governors, I am writing to remind parents of the school's expectations around pupils' and parents' use of social media.

Please be aware of the following:

- Parents and pupils should not send friend requests to, or follow, staff members' social media accounts. Staff will not accept friend requests from pupils or parents
- Parents and pupils will not send messages to staff members through their social media accounts. Staff will not respond to social media messages from pupils or parents
- Pupils will not access social media sites within school, unless under direction of a member of staff
- Parents and pupils should not post malicious, defamatory or fictitious comments on social networking sites about the school or any member of the school community

For more details, please refer to the school's social media policy, available in full on the school's website.

Failure to follow these guidelines will result in disciplinary action for the pupil(s) involved, following the school's usual disciplinary procedures. In serious cases of social media misuse, parents may be banned from the school grounds and/or the school may take legal action under the Defamation Act 2013 or the Malicious Communications Act 1998.

If you wish to contact any member of school staff, please do so through the official channels. Our school telephone number is 0161 681 6351. The office email address is info@southfailsworth.oldham.sch.uk

If you have any questions about the contents of letter, please contact the school using the methods above.

Thank you for ensuring that South Failsworth Primary School is a safe and pleasant place to work for all pupils, parents and staff.

Yours faithfully,

Vicki Foy

Headteacher