

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY  
PARK HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

***'We aim to bring out the best in everyone.'***

Date agreed: 2/10/17

Signed: .....

Review date: 12 months from adoption by governing body

## **Introduction**

Social media applications give employees of Park Hill Primary School opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in a new way and acknowledge that new media has become a regular part of everyday life. The school understands the importance of using these technologies and services effectively and flexibly to instantly share good news, best practice and to build relationships, whilst maintaining a balance between our duties to our service users and partners, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

We recognise that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and blogs etc. However, employees' use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information, and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.

The aim of this policy is to ensure.

- That the reputation of Park Hill Primary School is promoted correctly and positively and that both are not exposed to negative attention, legal or governance risks
- That the reputation of Park Hill Primary School is not exposed to legal defamation
- Employees and students are protected

The policy applies to the use of all social media platforms for both business and personal purposes, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, online discussion forums, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs (collectively referred to as social media in this policy); whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using school ICT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.

## **Related Documentation**

This policy refers to, and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable User Agreement
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy Statement
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy Procedure
- Data Protection

## **A. Principles of this policy**

The purpose of this policy is **not** to ask staff to refrain from social networking and blogging sites in their personal time; however, staff should ensure that they do not engage in activities using social media that may bring the school into disrepute including

- Inappropriate language and/or posting derogatory or offensive comments
- Contravening the safeguarding and protection of pupils and students
- Harassment, defamation or making derogatory comments about colleagues or the School
- Bring into question an employee's suitability to work within an education setting.

## **B. Social Media for official School use**

All proposals for using social media networking websites applications as part of the School whether hosted by the School or by a third party, must be approved by a delegated person or authority e.g. head teacher. The use of a social media platform should be part of a wider marketing strategy, with specific objectives set for a social media strategy, with clear measureable key performance indicators to ensure the strategy is working for the intended audience. The tone of social media marketing should be organisational, representing the School and not personal.

The School representatives must adhere to this policy with applies to uses of social media and networking website applications by all School representatives. This includes, but is not limited to public facing applications, such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses, such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on the School network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Park Hill Primary School expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right to freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Social networking applications/representatives of Park Hill Primary School, must not be used to publish any content which may put Park Hill Primary School at risk of legal action including but are not limited to:

- Defamation or libel,
- Breach of data protection
- Disclosure of personal, confidential or sensitive information
- Breaches of Park Hill Primary School or third party's copyright or other intellectual property right.

Such actions include but are not limited to material of a sexual or offensive nature that may bring Park Hill Primary School in to disrepute.

Employees who are delegated to represent the Park Hill Primary School via social media platforms.

- Must not use such platforms for party political purposes or specific campaigning purposes. The School is not permitted to publish material which 'in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party'.
- Must not say or incite anything that conflicts with Park Hill Primary School duty to eliminate discrimination or promote equality.
- 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 or otherwise be used to harass, bully or intimidate others.
- Must not be used for actions that would put Park Hill Primary School Representative in breach of the Code of Conduct.
- Must not do anything which damages the reputation of Park Hill Primary School into disrepute.

- Must, in using social networking applications, treat colleagues, managers, partner organisations and the public with respect.
- Must note that the use of social media is an informal form of communication which is not appropriate for formal matters such as the raising of grievances.
- Must report any concerns they have regarding their own social media content or the content posted by other Representatives to the appropriate person immediately.
- Must report any complaints or concerns from a third party (whether from a colleague or a member of the public) regarding their content to the head teacher who shall take appropriate action.
- Employees must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance. Even if it made it clear that the views on such topics do not represent those of the School, such comments would still damage the school's reputation.
- The school logo and other branding elements should be used where appropriate for official use. The logo should not be used on social networking application which are unrelated to or are not representative of Park Hill Primary School official position.
- Placing comments on the School owned pages via personal accounts is allowed. Any contributions must be made in a professional manner. Personal promotion via personal accounts on the School owned pages is strictly prohibited.
- The School representatives should ensure that any contributions they make are professional and uphold the reputation of the School.
- A School account on a social media or networking website may only be set-up with written consent from a delegated person of authority within the School e.g. head teacher
- Only authorised administrators may access the account
- All information published must comply with the School confidentiality clauses set out in Employment Contracts and be in line with data protection laws and other relevant policies.
- Students, families and carers should not be referenced online without their express consent unless it is the duplication of an image or news article that has already been signed off.
- The School representatives should not promote or comment on political matters or issues that may be regarded as such.
- Employees, who are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, should refrain from making the communication until it has been discussed with the School.
- If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the School or sponsors, employees should notify the School immediately. All staff are responsible for protecting reputation of the School.

It is also important to ensure that members of the public and other users of online services know when a social networking application is being used for official purposes. To assist with this, all representatives must adhere to the following requirements:

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

### **C. Respecting intellectual property and confidential information**

Staff should not do anything to jeopardise confidential information and intellectual property through the use of social media.

In addition, staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other companies and individuals, which can create liability for the School, as well as the individual author.

Do not use the School logos, brand names, slogans of other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission.

To protect yourself and the School against liability for copyright infringement, where appropriate, reference sources of particular information posted or uploaded and cite them accurately. If you have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, ask the School before making the communication.

#### **D. Compliance with related policies and agreements**

Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of the School policies. If a social media post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach then in online forum. For example, employees are prohibited from using social media to:

- (a) Breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies
- (b) Breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality, safeguarding and child protection.
- (c) Breach school/Disciplinary/Grievance policy
- (d) Defame or disparage the School, its partners, employees, pupils, parents and other stakeholders.
- (e) Harass or bully other staff in any way
- (f) Unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties or breach our Equal Opportunities Policy
- (g) Breach our Data Protection Policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague on line)
- (h) Breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be yourself or by making misleading statements).

Staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the School and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school.

As representatives of Park Hill Primary School employees need to be mindful that information they share through social networking applications, are subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. Employees must also operate in line with Park Hill Primary School Equality Policy.

Employees who breach any of the above may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **E. Monitoring of ICT Facilities**

Employees should be aware that in using the School ICT resources and communication systems for any personal matter that it will not be private or confidential from the School. To clarify: any message, files data document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communication transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems *can* be viewed by the head teacher or designated officer.

The School reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our ICT resources and communications system, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules and regulatory duties are being complied with and you consent to such monitoring by your acknowledgement of this policy and your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, posting, log-ins recordings and other uses of the system. It should be noted, however, that monitoring is not undertaken as a matter of routine.

We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

Employees should note that engaging in inappropriate activities even in private spaces may be subject to disciplinary action. Similarly, employees who fail to report any inappropriate activities that is their duty to report (implied or otherwise) that consequently question their suitability to work with children or bring the school into disrepute would may also be subject to disciplinary action.

The school reserve the right to close any applications or remove content published which may adversely affect the reputation of the School or put it at risk of legal action.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for purpose of committing the breach.

## **F. School email address**

Staff must only use their work email address for official School purposes only. If staff are found to be using their work email address for personal use they may face disciplinary action.

## **G. Using Social Media for Personal Use**

The School recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity and respects employees' rights to a private life.

While they are not acting on behalf of the organisation, employees should be aware that if associated with Park Hill Primary School their activities **may** affect the perceptions that people have of the School and potentially damage the reputation of the organisation if they are recognised as being an employee.

Employees should be mindful that when using social media applications even in private spaces they do not use or participate in any activities that would question their suitability to work with children or bring the school into disrepute.

The School cannot prevent staff from referring to where they work, but staff should use caution if this information is disclosed as it may bring School into disrepute. However, the employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a twitter name) should not contain Park Hill Primary School.

The School logo should not be used on social networking applications which are related to or are not representative of the School official person.

Staff may be required to remove social media postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy and the disciplinary policy.

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 from the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18.

No employee should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.

Where family and friends have pupils in the school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the School in writing.

It is illegal for an adult to network, falsely, as a child on social media platforms.

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the School. Failure to comply with the above may result in disciplinary action which could lead to a dismissal.

Employees must be aware that the misuse of ICT facilities and the internet by a member of staff is a serious matter any may result in disciplinary action being taken by the School and may result in dismissal in serious cases.

## **H. KEY PRINCIPLES**

The key principles to take into consideration with regards to the policy are:

- Staff must be aware of potential conflicts that may arise from their personal use of the internet/social media outputs.
- Staff must ensure that their professional integrity remains a priority.
- Staff must consider that information disclosed by them does not bring the School into disrepute or cause offence to other colleagues, students or their family eg indicating their personal opinion on the strategy or decisions of the School or the individuals responsible for the implementation
- Staff should not share School confidential information including photographs and videos without the permission of the School
- Staff should not breach others' intellectual property right.
- Staff should not disclose personal data or information of a colleague, student, pupil or family of a child without permission
- Staff who write blogs, microblogs and other personal websites in which they do not identify themselves as Park Hill Primary School employee's and do not discuss School and are purely for personal purposes would not fall within this policy however it is advisable that they provide a disclaimer which clarifies that any views or opinions shared are distinctly separate from their employer or other organisation where they are an employee or volunteer.
- Staff who write blogs, microblogs and other personal websites in which they do identify themselves as employees of Park Hill Primary School, must seek permission from the head teacher prior to declaring their employers.
- Staff who have existing or plan to create blogs, microblogs and other personal websites which will identify them as School employee's must inform the head teacher to ensure that due impartiality and confidentiality is maintained.
- Upon termination of employment, staff must return any information stored on internet or social media sites that was prepared/created for the purpose of carrying their role whilst employed with the School.
- The use of social media and networking website applications during the working day is prohibited, unless permission has been given by a delegated person of authority e.g. head teacher

Where applications or websites allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression only to lawful conduct. The School expects that users of social media and networking websites will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with the following:

- A School account on a social media or networking websites may only be set-up with written consent from a delegated person or authority within the School
- Only authorised administrators may access the account.
- All information published must comply with the School confidentiality clauses set out in Employment Contracts and be in line with data protection laws and other relevant policies



- Students, families and carers should not be referenced online without their express consent unless it is the duplication of an image or news article that has already been signed off
- Any employee who becomes aware of social networking activity that would be deemed inappropriate should make the School aware as soon as possible.
- Staff must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance. Even if it made it clear that the views on such topics do not represent those of the School, such comments could still damage the School reputation
- Employees, who are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, should refrain from making the communication until it has been discussed with the head teacher.
- If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on the School or sponsors, employees should notify the School immediately. All staff are responsible for protecting the reputation of the School.
- Social media and networking websites applications:
  1. Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the School into disrepute.
  2. Must not be used in an abuse or hateful manner.
  3. Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
  4. Must not be used to discuss or advise on any matters relating to private or confidential matters regarding the School, including staff, students or students and their families and carers.
  5. Must not use photographs of students whose parents/carers have not signed a photograph permission form.
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend'/contact on a social media platform.
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the School on their personal account unless explicit permission has been sought from the School
- Employees 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.