



Heptonstall J, I and N School Social Networking Policy for Staff, Governors, Friends and Volunteers

This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies that form part of our overall safeguarding ethos: Protecting and Safeguarding Children, Anti Bullying, Managing Allegations Against Staff, Intimate and Personal Care, Preventing Radicalisation, Medical Conditions, Computing (+ e-Safety) and Social Networking Policies.

Introduction

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook (c.f. YHGfL Guidance attached to this policy as Appendices 1, 2 and 3), Myspace or Bebo and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. In addition, Heptonstall School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

Key Principles

Everyone* (i.e. Staff, Governors, Friends and Volunteers) at Heptonstall School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.

It is important to protect everyone* at Heptonstall School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone* at Heptonstall School considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.

This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted.

[***N.B.** In this policy, wherever the terms "Everyone*" or "everyone*" appear – it denotes the full list of Staff, Governors, Friends and Volunteers]

Aims

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, Friends and volunteers at Heptonstall School with respect to social networking.

To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Code of Conduct for Everyone* at Heptonstall School – Social Networking

The following are **not considered acceptable** at Heptonstall School:

- The use of the school’s name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

In addition to the above everyone* at Heptonstall School must ensure that they:

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, or the school’s reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence, which is also contrary to the school’s ethos and principles.

The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school’s reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Review Framework

This policy should be reviewed annually (or sooner in the event of revised legislation or guidance) and links to other school policies and statutory responsibilities.

Signed.....Head Teacher

Date.....

Signed.....Chair of Governor

Date.....

Date ratified at Full Governing Body: 15/10/2020

Review Date: October 2022

Reviewed by: Safeguarding Governor

Appendix 1

Teacher Tips for Using Facebook

Here are some suggested guidelines for using Facebook safely:

- Ensure that all your privacy settings are set to 'Friends Only'. Go to your Account Settings and make sure that the Custom Settings are highlighted and that these show that status, photos and posts are set to 'Friends Only'.
- Consider what information you have on your info page and your profile picture. Including brief information and an unidentifiable picture, e.g. sunset, will assist in making your profile indistinctive.
- If you have professional and social 'friends' on Facebook, using the group list feature will ensure that you can distinguish what type of information you send to particular groups. Make sure that you do not accept pupils (even those that have recently left the school), parent or carers as 'friends'.
- Ensure that you do not bring your professional status and educational institute into disrepute. Make sure that you consider what you post about colleagues, pupils or parents. Taking charge of your digital reputation is important, as unprofessional posts or images will lead to disciplinary action and possible failure to gain employment in the future.
- Be careful what photographs you include on your profile. Once these are uploaded, they are very difficult to remove and, using image editing software, they can be altered and merged with other more distasteful images.
- Be aware of any spam or potential virus risks sent via rogue posts. It is advisable to check with anti-virus firms if you get any suspicious requests or posts.
- If you are alerted to any negative or unscrupulous information about yourself, colleagues or your school on Facebook, inform your headteacher. Further advice to help with cyberbullying incidents etc., can be gained from a professional association such as your Trade Union.

Appendix 2

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/social-media-how-to-use-it-safely>

Appendix 3

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/uksic-facebook-release-a-new-guide-for-schools-using-apps>