

Policy: Social Media

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Authorised by: Governing Body

Updated by: Head Teacher



This policy is written to establish the key principles and code of conduct for everyone to adhere to in order to protect the children and families of the school. It should be read alongside the school's E-Safety Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

To outline, social media and networking activities conducted online outside of the school environment, can include blogging, (the writing of personal journals to publicly accessible web pages), involvement in social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc) posting material such as photos, videos, messages and opinions. The unintended consequences of using social media to voice frustrations and annoyances can be wide ranging, and affect children other than your own, and their families, and can have potential unforeseen legal consequences.

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people, including children. We recognise that social networking can bring many benefits, but there are also potential risks. The aim of this document is to give clarity to the way in which social media sites are to be used by the Upton St Leonards School community: pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and other volunteers. All members of the school community should be mindful that information they share through social media and networks, even if it is on private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and UK libel and defamation laws.

Key Principles

- Everyone at Upton St Leonards CE Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues, friends and members of staff with the professionalism and privacy that they deserve.
- It is important to protect everyone at Upton St Leonards CE Primary School from any allegations and misinterpretation / misrepresentations which can arise from inappropriate use of social media and networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working at or attending the school either as a paid employee, volunteer or visitor must not communicate with children via social networking.
- It is advised that all staff working at Upton St Leonards CE Primary School consider who their 'online friends' are. It is advised to consider your personal settings, content of your social networking page and accessibility. You may be potentially leaving yourself open to allegations of inappropriate contact or conduct or even find yourself exposed to unwanted contact.

- No photos, videos or other images should be posted to any public or restricted availability website without full permission and knowledge of the parents or guardians of all children involved.
- This limitation extends to publishing any names of children or families without permissions as outlined above.

The use of social media and 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 media sites. Pupils should not access social media sites whilst at school without first obtaining permission from a member of staff. Pupils and parents are reminded that the use of some social media sites is inappropriate for Primary-aged pupils. In terms of private use of social media 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.

Use of social media and networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social media 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 will be advised as follows:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff are **strongly 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.
- Staff must not use social media sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality. It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set to 'friends only', irrespective of use/purpose.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
- Staff should only use social media in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:
 - Bring the school into disrepute;
 - Lead to valid parental complaints;
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees;
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors
 - Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children

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 media and networking via this policy. Other methods of school communication including the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion will also be used to reinforce the messages in this policy.

- Parents/carers should not to post images (photos and videos) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured
- Parents/carers should raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media sites
- Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community

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

There are four UK statutes that cover the use of Internet technology in relation to bullying. All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy. The school can take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- Poses a threat to a member of the school community
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school, or its employees/governors

Where appropriate, legal action will be taken by the school's governors.