

This policy aims to:

- safeguard children, young people and adults;
- ensure school leadership know how to deal with inappropriate use of social networking sites;
- secure the positive reputation of the school;
- ensure information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school;
- provide a balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

1. Context

When using social media, the most important fact to consider is the teacher's and the child's online reputation. This is the perception, estimation and opinion that are formed when someone is encountered online. This could be when someone visits their social networking profile, but could also be when anyone reads a comment they posted on another profile. It could also be when someone sees their online photo albums or an image with them in it, indeed any instance or reference of them that either they or someone else posted.

2. Introduction to the Policy

Nanpean Primary School is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites, including Facebook. The widespread availability and use of social networking application 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 includes:

- **Empowering** children and young people to keep themselves safe when online;
- **Encouraging** them to be responsible users of the technology;
- **Engaging** children and young people to recognise the risks and benefits of online communication
- **Enabling** the adults around children and young people (parents, carers, professionals or volunteers) to understand and support them in their online world.

3. Facebook

Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

"If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us"

"We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk to their children about safe internet use can be found on this help page."

4. Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity. The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the school representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, e.g. netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, e.g. Facebook
- Media sharing services, e.g. YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, e.g. Twitter

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Inclusion Policy.

5. Use of social networking sites

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher.

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher first.

For this reason all social media sites are subject to filtering. However, it is accepted that from time to time, for good educational reasons, students may need to research topics (e.g. racism, drugs, discrimination, safe use of social media sites) that would normally result in internet searches being blocked. In such a situation, staff can request that the Network Manager (and other relevant person) can temporarily remove those sites from the filtered list for the period of study. Any request to do so, should be auditable, with clear reasons for the need.

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

6. Terms of use

The Terms of Use apply to all uses of social networking 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 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. Users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Social Networking applications:

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute;
- 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;
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff;
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies;
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents;
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with;
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school;
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head Teacher;
- Staff 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 up to and including termination of employment.

7. Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- 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 in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18.
- This means that no member of the school staff 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 school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school

8. Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking

- No pupil under 13 should be freely accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. Demonstration by the teacher, as children are accessing at home, is acceptable in terms of teaching children safe use. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is:
http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day (unless part of a closely monitored lesson to teach safe aspects of using social media).
- All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using a mobile phone.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day (unless part of a closely monitored lesson to teach safe aspects of using social media).
- Any attempts to breach firewalls/ or bypass proxy settings will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to you tutor / class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

9. Child protection guidance

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should record the disclosure in line with their child protection/safeguarding policy. Schools must refer the matter to the LADO. If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes. If the disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality. The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given. If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection/safeguarding policy until the police investigation has been carried out.

Policy written: 10th July 2013

Reviewed by: Carly Marsden (Acting Headteacher)

Review date: July 2014