



Parc Eglos School

Personal Use of Social Media Sites Policy

Introduction to the Policy

Parc Eglos is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites including Facebook, Twitter and MSN. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications 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 policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, governors, parents and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives'.

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.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks;
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected;
- That staff understand the appropriate procedures if they abuse other people, or are being abused.

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.

MSN

MSN recommend 13 but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on MSN.

This guidance is to advise and protect staff from accusations of improper relationships with pupils:

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs, for example Blogger;

- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com;
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook;
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube;
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example 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 Equality and Diversity Policy.

Use of Social Networking Sites in Worktime

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

Social Networking as part of School Service

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 example, links to twitter on our website).

Terms of Use

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below 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 our 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. Parc Eglos School expects that 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, or a representative, 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 Headteacher;
- Staff should be aware that, if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation, then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action;
- If staff are the recipient of defamatory comments about them on Social Networking sites, made by children, parents or other stakeholders, the Headteacher should be informed immediately and contact made to legal services.

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 headteacher 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.

Guidance/Protection for Pupils on using Social Networking

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen. At the time of 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 - either on netbooks, PCs or handheld devices;
- Mobile Phones are only allowed in school in Year 5 and 6, as long as written parental permission has been sent to the office. All phones must remain in the child's bag during the school day
- 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 Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens;
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day;
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision;
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens;
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

Child Protection/Safeguarding 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 policy;
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate with the Police;
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes;
- If 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, normal processes in the child protection policy will be followed until a police investigation has been carried out.

Failure to adhere to this policy will be considered gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the school representative. This could involve legal action.

Review & Approval Date	October 2016
Signed by Chair of Governors	Marc Talbot
Signed by Headteacher	Brett Dye
Next review date	October 2017