



# Use of Social Media & Networking Policy

**Date of this review: Autumn 2015**

**Date of next review: Autumn 2018**

## **Rationale**

The school acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. However, it is very important that we use such sites respectfully and responsibly.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect all members of the community and safeguard our children.

## **Aims**

We want to provide a safe environment where everyone treats each other with respect and uses technology responsibly.

## **1 Objectives**

- 1.1 Provide a policy that clearly sets out our expectations and procedures
- 1.2 Ensure that our community understands our expectations regarding the use of social media and networking
- 1.3 Educate our children so that they make good choices about the use of social media and networking
- 1.4 Support parents in their monitoring and regulation of their child's use of social media and networking

## **2 The use of Social Media and Networking**

- 2.1 The school communicates with parents through email and text messages; the school does not use social media and networking.
- 2.2 Staff and governors will use social media and networking responsibly and will not bring themselves or the school into disrepute; concerns relating to this will be treated seriously and in line with relevant policies. (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.)
- 2.3 Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. We expect that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights and feelings of others. Where there are concerns regarding online postings the school will involve outside agencies as deemed appropriate.
- 2.4 Parents are reminded that many sites require members to be 13 years of age; therefore children at this school are not expected to use social media and networking outside of school and will not be using sites in school (by adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Wendover CE Junior School protects itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access)
- 2.5 Where concerns are raised, schools have a duty to investigate and protect, even where the activity originates outside the school. For example:
  - Someone is receiving messages from an ex-pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.
  - Messages are being posted on a site out of school time. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of the site outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the school's recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues. The school would involve outside agencies as appropriate.
- 2.6 If a parent/carer refuses to engage and activity continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment
- 2.7 Parents are requested to contact the school should they have any concern; the use of social media and networking is unlikely to resolve the concern and may contravene this policy
- 2.8 This guidance also applies to text and mobile phone cyber bullying as well as any other online postings, including websites, that are defamatory and/or which bring the school or individuals into disrepute

## **Linked Policies:**

Use of Mobile Phones  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Anti-Bullying  
Use of Photographs