Newport Infant School and Nursery

Social Media Policy

Date of Policy Creation/Last Review	October 2024
Policy Lead	Emma Heeley
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body	February 2025
Frequency of Review	Three yearly
Review Due	October 2025
Policy Category	Safeguarding

Rationale

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting 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 duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

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. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Safeguard all children
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school.

The Social Media policy relates and should be read in conjunction with other policies including, E-Safety policy, ICT/Computing Policy and Disciplinary Policy and procedures.

All staff and workers at the school need to be aware of the risks and accountability of inappropriate or inadvertent provision of information about themselves, the school or its pupils and staff or the wider school community in the Social Media arena.

Every employee or volunteer working within the school setting is accountable for information published and must be aware that the Head teacher or a named representative may monitor such information.

It is important to note that information available in the public domain which has the potential for harm, distress or reputational damage may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

What is Social Networking and Social Media?

Social networking and social media are communication tools based on websites or networks which allow you to share information or other material about yourself and your interests with groups of other people.

These groups of people could be:

- People who are known to you (friends or colleagues)
- People you don't know but who share common interests (such as teaching, working in Telford)
- Anyone who could find your comments through search engines

Examples of Social Media and Social Networking sites and services include:
*Facebook
* Twitter
* Tik Tok
* YouTube
* LinkedIn
* Blogs
* Discussion groups
* Mailing Lists
* WhatsApp Messenger
* Snapchat
*Instagram
*Class Dojo

What social media activity does this policy cover?
This policy is mainly concerned about two types of Social Media activity:
• Your own personal activity, done for your friends and contacts, but not under or in the name of Newport Infant School and Nursery (or Telford & Wrekin Council).
• Activity carried out in the name of and business of Newport Infant School and Nursery, such as a school story on Class Dojo or a post on a Facebook group that represents, or appears to represent, the official views of the school.

This policy is not about stopping the use of – or accessing of – such groups, but aims to ensure that the use of social media does not harm the interests of the children and young people we support, or damages the reputation of the school or school staff.

Aim of this policy
This policy recognises that social media is an integral and growing part of everyday life and makes important contribution to teaching and learning opportunities.
However, the rapid evolution of social networking technologies requires a robust policy framework and this policy aims to:
• Assist staff working with children to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies to monitor their own standards and practice
• Set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use
• Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken
• Support safe working practice
• Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils
• Prevent adults abusing or misusing their position of trust.

This document applies to all staff who work in the school whether paid or unpaid and includes members of the Governing Body.

Principles

The principles that underpin this policy are:

• Adults who work with pupils are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

• Adults in the school must work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.

• Adults in the school must continually monitor and review their own practice in terms of the continually evolving world of social networking and ensure that they consistently follow the guidance contained in the document.

Safer Social Networking Practice

This document applies to current social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc and all other current and emerging social media platforms.

All staff and volunteers must adhere to, and apply the principles of this document in all aspects of their work. Failure to do so may lead to action being taken under the disciplinary procedure.

Social Networking "Must Nots"

• Staff or volunteers must not make comments on behalf of the school or claim to represent the views of the school, unless they have explicit permission to do so

• Staff or volunteers should never make a 'friend' of a pupil at the school where they are working on their social networking page and seek the advice of the Head teacher or Deputy Head before becoming 'friends' with ex-students once they reach adulthood.

• Staff or volunteers are strongly advised not be a 'friend' of a parent/carer of a pupil or ex-pupil of the school.

• Staff or volunteers should not access social media within lesson times.

• Staff or volunteers should never post confidential information about themselves, the school, the governing body, the Local Authority, their colleagues, or their pupils. If they are posting in an 'official' capacity, they should not post confidential information about members of the public.

• Staff and volunteers should not make allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, pupils or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, or the Local Authority. Doing so may result in disciplinary action being taken against them. If they have concerns about practices within the school or the actions of pupils or parents, they must act in accordance with the local authority's Whistle-Blowing Policy and the school's complaints procedure.

Social Networking "Shoulds"

• All adults, particularly those new to the school setting, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and/or the school if they were to be published outside of the site.

• In their own interests, adults within school settings need to be aware of the dangers of putting their personal information onto social networking sites such as addresses, home or

mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for families/friends having access to staff outside the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.
• There will be occasions when there are social contacts between parents and staff, where for example the parent and staff member are part of the same social circle. These contacts, however, will be easily recognised and should be openly acknowledged with the Headteacher where there may be implications for the adult and their position within the school setting.
• On leaving employment from the school, staff should review their social networking sites to ensure information relating to the school is accurate and appropriate.

Social Networking Good Practice
Staff and volunteers must understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of any sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.
• On Facebook, they should understand whether the posts they make are Public (anyone can see them), visible to Friends (only people on their Friends list can see them) or visible to Friends of Friends, which means that posts are visible to all the friends of friends, which could be many hundreds or even thousands of people.
• On Twitter and LinkedIn, all posts, unless they are direct messages to another user, are visible to everyone (the whole world)
• If you are unsure of who can see your posts on other sites, you should always assume that the information is publically available to all and could be found by people doing a search on Google, for example.

- Social media communication for and in the business of Newport Infant School and Nursery could be open to Freedom of Information, and this includes the PTA

Before posting, staff and volunteers should ask themselves the following questions:
1. Do you want the whole world to see? Even if you restrict your own visibility settings, these can be overridden by the settings of others, or people can copy and paste the information into other, public places.
2. Do you want the post to be seen forever? Once you have posted something, it is almost impossible to delete it again from the internet, even if you delete it from the site. There are sites that archive all Twitter posts, for example, so even if you delete a post from Twitter, it can still be found.
3. What if the information is taken out of context? It is very easy for others to take what is posted, alter it, and re-post it elsewhere. It is also possible that your hard work, posted online, may be used inappropriately by others.
4. Could the information put you or others in danger? What you post could tell others that your house is empty or that the pupils in your class are on a school trip, which could have implications for a looked-after child.
5. Are you violating any laws? The information could breach copyright, or specific legislation relating to privacy of vulnerable groups, for example.
6. Is your message clear? Could you unintentionally be breaking cultural norms or putting out something unintentionally offensive. Is it clear whether or not you are posting in an official capacity?

7. Could the actions of your social networking friends reflect on you? Could your friends or friends of friends "tag" you in photographs or link you to inappropriate activities through their own posts?
If you have any doubts about any of these points, you should seek the advice of the Head teacher or Deputy.

School's Social Media sites

Newport Infant School and Nursery School has an official Facebook page. Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of Newport Infant School and Nursery.

Information provided must be worthwhile and accurate; what is published on the site will reflect on the school's image, reputation and services.
Staff must stay within the law and be aware that child protection, privacy, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright law may apply to the content of social media.
Staff members must respect their audience and be sensitive in the tone of language used when discussing topics that others may find controversial or objectionable.
The Head teacher, and website administrators, must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the site refreshed and relevant.
It is important that enough staff members are trained and are able to maintain and moderate a site in case of staff absences or turnover.

Moderation of content:

Sites created for the use of Social Media must have the strongest privacy settings to prevent breaches of confidentiality. Pupils and other participants must not be able to be identified; it is paramount that student names are not used in posts or visible on any photographs.
The content and postings on the school's Social Media must be moderated.
Moderation is the responsibility of the Headteacher and website administrators who run the sites. It is important that there are enough approved moderators to provide cover during leave and absences so that the site continues to be moderated.
Comments, posts or behaviour likely to cause extreme offence (racist, homophobic insults) or likely to put a young person at risk of harm, will not be tolerated and are illegal. Such comments must never be posted when pending approval and appropriate authorities, for example the Police or Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), must be informed in the case of illegal content or behaviour.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as 'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.'
If cyberbullying does take place, employees should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails.
Employees are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site.
Employees are encouraged to report any and all incidents of cyberbullying to their line manager or the Headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the

individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police. Employees may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representatives. If the staff member or volunteer becomes aware of a pupil being subject to cyberbullying, they should raise it with their line manager or Headteacher.

MOBILE PHONES

To ensure safety and welfare of children in our care personal mobile phones and cameras must not be used when children are present.

- All mobile phones should be kept in a place you judge as secure.
- In exceptional circumstances, agreed by the Head or Deputy, staff may keep their phone accessible and switched on as long as it is only used out of view of children.
- During school visits mobile phones should only be used if necessary to support safe organisation of the visit.
- Photographs or films of children must only be taken on school devices.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Staff should not give personal email addresses to parents or children. The school email addresses should be used if information is needed to be sent electronically.

Staff should keep mobile phone numbers private and only communicate with parents from the school landline or school mobile. Staff should not share work log ins or passwords with others. There are of course occasions where socially staff, children and parents may be together. These situations should be easily recognisable and openly acknowledged. If staff are ever unsure about the circumstances they should talk it through with the Head or Deputy.