

Giving young people hope and future



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

NEWBURY SCHOOL

This policy is drawn from:

- Keeping Children safe in Education (2022)

Introduction

In this technology rich world our pupils, parents and the wider community live in, Social Media is becoming more and more part of daily life. It's important for Newbury School to embrace social media to not only keep up to date with important changes that can impact learning in their classroom but also to connect with teachers across the globe who are sharing resources, ideas and discussing important aspects of education. This policy will explain acceptable use of various social media accounts. The policy will explain the purpose of social media in Newbury School and the benefits that will arise from its proper use. The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example pornography, fake news, racist or radical and extremist views

Contact being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults

Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images, or online bullying.

What is Social Media?

In this document, social media means electronic communication software, applications (including those running on mobile devices including texting, SMS, and videos), e-mail and web sites, which enable users to interact, create and exchange information online. Examples include, but are not limited to, sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, as well as online discussion forums, blogs, other and the use of webcams. All members of staff 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, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Equalities, Child Protection, Safeguarding, and IT Acceptable Use Policies.

Access to Social Media Sites using School Equipment/Systems

With the exception of communication sites created by or approved by the school for internal use, the school does not allow access to social networking websites from its computers or systems within the school day.

Key Principles when Using Social Media Sites

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. There are many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning. However, when using social media, the boundaries between professional and personal can become more blurred and users can unwittingly or wittingly publish things they may later regret. Published items can be capable of more than one interpretation but once published the damage may not be recoverable.

The golden principles

An individual is under a duty to:

Maintain proper professional boundaries with students, parents and carers even when students, parents or carers initiate electronic interaction.

Before posting items or communicating in social media to consider seriously whether the item would be said in public or shown in public or written for the public to read. If not, or if there is some doubt then it should not be posted because you may not be able to control who sees the information and how they interpret it.

Be particularly aware of the guidelines when staff have external friendships with parents/carers.

An individual is under a duty not to:

Disclose confidential information without express authority especially about students, parents or carers, staff, voluntary or other workers at the school nor breach their right to privacy

Engage in posts or activities, which are detrimental to maintaining effective working relationships between individuals 'working' at the school

Bring the reputation of the school into disrepute

Engage in activities, which compromise, or might be seen to compromise, the professional standards of teaching or the professional standards applicable to support staff

Share information with students or parents/carers in any environment that they would not willingly and appropriately share in a school or school related setting or in the community

Post comments, which incite others to make discriminatory, or other professionally unacceptable comments Post school logos or similar images that may lead readers of posts etc. to believe the individual is speaking on behalf of the school.

Items placed on social networking sites will be regarded as having been posted in the public domain. Thus, it is very important to be careful when using social media personally.

Effective practices when using social media sites

Members of staff should:

Use caution when posting information on social networking sites and other online forums

Consider refraining from identifying themselves as working for the school as posted content could bring the school into disrepute.

Take care that their interaction on social media does not damage working relationships between members of staff, students at the school, their families and other stakeholders and/or working partners of the school.

Maintain professional standards by communicating with student & parents/ carers electronically at appropriate times of the day and through established education platforms (for example, a web page dedicated to school programme, project or class rather than via a personal profile).

Avoid exchanging private texts, phone numbers, personal email addresses or photos of a personal nature with students/parents or carers.

Decline student initiated 'friend' requests and not issue 'friend' requests to students nor communicate with students on any social network site or similar website or forum.

Maintain a formal, courteous and professional tone in all communications with students to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained.

If posting an item about an aspect of the school, for which you have express permission from the Head Teacher, make it clear that any personal views are not necessarily those of the school.

Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, and subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

Manage the privacy and security settings of your social media accounts.

Privacy settings can shift and change without notice. Check the settings frequently.

Ensure that privacy settings for content/photos are set appropriately and monitor who can post to your social media locations and view what you post. You should not allow students to view or post on those locations.

Protect yourself from identity theft by restricting the amount of personal information that you give out. Be cautious about posting detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords and enable personal details to be cloned for fraudulent acts etc and grooming.

The following activities must not be undertaken:

Bullying and harassment – such conduct against any colleagues via social media sites is taken as seriously as workplace bullying and harassment. Any allegations will be dealt with under the schools' normal bullying and harassment and/or disciplinary policies and may be treated as a criminal offence in certain circumstances

Incitement of racial or religious hatred or similar activities – these may lead to criminal investigations and penalties

Posting libellous statements – an individual may be legally liable for any damage to the reputation of the individual concerned. As a representative of the school, any statement made by an employee could mean the school is vicariously liable for defamatory statements if carried out in the normal course of employment, even if performed without the consent or approval of the school. Similarly, making such statements on your own initiative and not at work could mean you face legal action

Grooming students or similar activities to develop an inappropriate relationship(s)

Bring the school's reputation into disrepute

Compromising the security of the school's systems

Breaching confidential information about the school or any of its students, staff, governors, volunteers or other individuals associated with the school. Don't publish anything that might allow inferences to be drawn which could embarrass or damage a student, employee, governor, volunteer or supplier.

Breaches of copyright or other similar infringements – passing on text, photos etc; may infringe the owner's copyright. Always ensure that you have the permission of the owner

The school takes the matters above seriously and disciplinary action will be taken. If substantiated, the normal outcome will be dismissal.

Feeling aggrieved or concerned about matters at work

When you feel that an unfair decision has been made or that malpractice is occurring what can you do? What you should not do is post your feelings online, which are likely to be impulsive, inappropriate or heated comments. Those may lead you into being part of the problem. Instead you can use several routes:

Whistle blowing procedure - for allegations of organisational malpractice or corruption – See *Whistle Blowing* policy on the school website. Following this procedure provides protection against dismissal and other sanctions if you disclose matters in the ways set out in the procedure. Posting comments first will mean you forfeit your legal protection.

Grievance procedure - if you feel aggrieved by a decision at the school that affects you personally.

Dealing with inappropriate contact or material/comments

If an individual becomes aware of inappropriate material/comments he/she should notify the DSL or Head teacher as soon as possible, and if possible provide print outs of the comments made.

If a student makes 'social' or inappropriate contact with an employee, the individual must notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible without making a response. Similarly, if any member of staff or individual associated with the school makes unintended contact with a pupil, the incident must be notified to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. The school can then deal with the situation as appropriate.

Refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy if the incident gives rise to potential or actual safeguarding concerns.

Linked policies

This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with other related school policies, including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy

This policy has been written & authorised by:

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| DATE: | MAY 2022 |
| NEXT REVIEW DATE | MAY 2023 |
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