

# ALDINGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL



# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## Document Change History.

Version no	Date	Change made by	Brief details of change
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## Document Review History.

Review Date	Reviewed by	Comments
20.01.2021	Curriculum Committee	No changes
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# ALDINGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY &

### GUIDANCE

Nativity plays, sports days, class assemblies ... These are many of your proudest parenting moments within the school walls, and it's natural to want to share your photos and videos on social media.

This policy has been written to give guidance to pupils, staff and parents on what is acceptable use of social networking sites.

Social media policies have a number of purposes, but the overriding function of this policy is to protect pupils, staff and parents from the many issues that can arise as a result of posting on social networking sites.

### What are the risks?

**Pupils** are at risk of cyber bullying, and may also become involved in cyber bullying themselves. They are also vulnerable to other serious crimes such as grooming and abduction if they share too much personal information on social media.

**Staff** may be vulnerable to malicious and defamatory comments (and potentially even threats and abuse) from parents or pupils, and to allegations of grooming and other forms of online abuse.

**Parents** may become involved in online disputes with other parents through social media. They may also potentially put their child and others within the school at risk by sharing photos, videos or other information that could make the children identifiable to others.

## *The use of social networking sites by pupils within school*

The school's Acceptable Use Policy outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook.

## *Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity*

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them **to protect their professional reputation** by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must never add pupils as friends into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff must not post pictures of school events without the Headteacher's consent.
- Staff must not use social networking sites whilst on the school premises or on school visits.
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.

- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

## **Comments posted by parents/carers**

This policy is used to inform parents and carers about their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking in relation to the school. School policies and documents, such as the Home School Agreement and the Complaints policy, provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

- Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Parents must not use social networking sites whilst on the school premises or on school visits.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites or in closed groups.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community. If parents suspect this is the case then they are advised to contact the Headteacher.

## **Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

Infringing a rule such as posting photos including other pupils will lead to parents being contacted by the school and asked to remove the content. If parents continue to break the rules, the school will have to ban cameras, phones and videos from school events. This may seem an extreme move - especially if you know that the parents of other children in your child's class

are happy to have photos posted on Facebook - but in some cases, identifying a child who is the subject of safeguarding (e.g. a child who has been adopted or fostered, or who has an injunction against a family member) could put them at risk. This means it's essential that we uphold our policies through whatever means possible.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Headteacher on behalf of the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy (see Appendix 1).

If appropriate, the incident would be reported to the police. Such circumstances would include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged. Furthermore, laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- expose an individual to hatred, ridicule or contempt
  - cause an individual to be shunned or avoided
  - lower an individual's standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
  - disparage an individual in their business, trade, office or profession.
- (National Association of Headteachers)

## ***Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Site***

Dear

It has come to the attention of the Governing Body that inappropriate comments regarding [the school/members of the school community] have been made on a social networking site.

As these comments do not comply with the expectations set out in the school's Social Media Policy and Home School Agreement (enclosed), you are respectfully asked to remove them from the website.

Comments, concerns or complaints posted on social media can't be addressed by the school in a constructive manner. We would therefore encourage you to enter into productive communication with the school in order to resolve any outstanding differences. The school has an 'open door' policy with regard to dealing with parental communication and there are also policies in place such as the Complaints Policy if required.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governing Body