

The Federation of Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools Social Media Policy 2021

Introduction

We are aware, and acknowledge, that many adults and children use social networking sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. If not used thoughtfully, social media can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation. This policy 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.

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Key Principles

Everyone at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary schools have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.

It is important to protect everyone at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary schools from allegations and misinterpretations, which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.

Aims

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, Friends and volunteers at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools with respect to social networking.

To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Code of Conduct for Everyone at Heavers Farm Primary: Social Networking

The following are not considered acceptable at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Executive Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the Internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct, or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities unless this is part of a school or class blog which has been agreed with the Executive Headteacher.

In addition to the above everyone at Heavers Farm and Selsdon Primary Schools must ensure that they:

- Do not add any pupil, or former pupil under the age of 18, on their social media platforms.
- Do not post pictures or videos of any pupil, or former pupil under the age of 18 on their personal social media platforms.
- Should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- Should not make reference to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Executive Headteacher
- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, or the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.
- Make sure that the Executive Headteacher is added as an Administrator on each class blog (wordpress.com) or gives the URL and login details to the Headteacher (for non-Wordpress blogs).

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.

Guidance and Protection for Staff on Using Social Media

- 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
- No member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's social media. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' social media 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 Head of School in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment
- It is illegal for an adult to use social media, giving their age and status as a child

Guidance and Protection for Pupils on Using Social Media

- All pupil's mobile phones must be handed into an adult in school at the beginning of the school day. The phone should be switched off.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's social media. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff should inform the Executive Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens
- No school IT equipment should be used to access social networking sites at any time of day unless for direct school use (e.g. posting information on the school blogs).
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision
- We have a zero-tolerance policy to cyber bullying

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In instances where there has been a breach of this policy, the allegation will be fully investigated under the school's staff disciplinary policy.

Cyber Bullying

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside school.

Here are some examples

- A child is receiving taunts on WhatsApp from a pupil who left the school three months ago: This is not a school responsibility; however, we would contact the new school to inform them and ask them to speak to the pupil.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using messages and social media. The pupils attend the school; this means that we have a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, to address this.

Once a disclosure is made, an investigation will take place to find out more information and will be dealt with in line the school's anti-bullying policy. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

If a parent or other adult makes threats online against a member of school staff, this will be dealt with as a bullying incident. The member of staff must inform the Head of School immediately and the other adult will be spoken to and given a warning. If the situation is not resolved, the police will be informed.