Social Networking Policy

'Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day'

Reviewed By	Cate Gregory	Policy Owner	6th December 2017
Approved by	Cate Gregory & Annette Hixon	Head of School	6th December 2017
Ratified by	Peter Gould	Governor	12th December 2017
NEXT REVIEW			January 2020

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the School's recommendations and requirements for the use of social networking media by its employees. In doing so, the School seeks to achieve an appropriate balance in the use of social networks by staff as private individuals, but also as employees and educators, with professional reputations and careers to maintain, and contractual and legislative requirements to adhere to.

Whilst the School does not wish to discourage staff from using such sites on the Internet in their personal time, it does expect certain standards of conduct to be observed in order to protect the School and its reputation, and also to protect staff from the dangers of inappropriate use.

Eligibility

This policy largely relates to the use of social networking applications by School staff in their own personal time, using their own ICT equipment.

The term 'employee' or 'staff' covers all employees/staff of the School, including casual staff and agency employees. Where individuals from partner organisations are involved in acting on behalf of the School, they will also be expected to comply with this Policy.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Bebo)
- Media sharing services, for example You Tube (uploading content)
- Micro-blogging applications (e.g. Twitter, Yammer, FMyLife)
- Online discussion forums and opinion sites (e.g. Ning)

Exceptions

This policy specifically addresses the use of social networking sites by school staff. Pupil use of these sites using the school network is covered in separate guidance.

Responsibility & Accountability

Executive Head teacher/ Head of school/Managers:

- Should ensure that all existing and new staff are familiar with this policy and its relationship to the School's standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT.
- Should provide opportunities to discuss appropriate social networking use by staff on a regular basis, and ensure that any queries raised are resolved swiftly.
- Must ensure that any allegations raised in respect of access to social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Rules.

Employees:

- Should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and its relationship to the School's standards, policies and guidance on the use of ICT.
- Should raise any queries or areas of concern they have relating to the use of social networking sites and interpretation of this Policy, with their line manager in the first instance.
- Must comply with this policy where specific activities/conduct are prohibited.

Governors:

- Will review this policy and its application on an annual basis.
- Should ensure that their own conduct is in line with that expected of staff, as outlined in this policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Working in an educational setting with young people, staff have a professional image to uphold, and how individuals conduct themselves online, helps to determine this image.

Friends/Befriending:

One of the functions of social networks is the ability to "friend" others, creating a group of individuals who share personal news and /or interests. The School recommends that staff do not accept invitations to "friend" pupils family members/friends. Staff are prohibited from contact with pupils.

Staff must not initiate friendships with pupils, or pupils' family members/friends, under any circumstances.

Staff who maintain social networking friendships with work colleagues, are required to adhere to the requirements below relating to content of interactions.

Content of interactions:

Staff must not make reference, either implicitly or explicitly, on social networking sites to the School, its employees, pupils, and their families. If staff adhere to this recommendation then the personal content of an individual's social networking memberships is unlikely to be of concern to the School.

An exception to the above would be content which details conduct outside of employment which affects the individual's suitability to perform his/her work, makes him/her liable to be unacceptable to other staff or management, or is liable to damage the School's reputation.

Security

Staff are advised to check their security profiles and privacy settings on the social networks that they use. If individuals are not clear about how to restrict access to their content, they should regard all content as publicly available and act accordingly.

In using social networking sites, staff are recommended to only post content that they would wish to be in the public domain. Even if content is subsequently removed from a site it may remain available and accessible. Staff should consider not only how content could reflect on them, but also on their professionalism and the reputation of the School as their employer.

Even with privacy settings in place it is still possible that the personal details of staff may be accessed more broadly than the other networkers identified by them. Any reference to such information by pupils and/or their families, which a staff member deems to be inappropriate or is concerned about, should be reported to their line manager in the first instance.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil and/or family members have made inappropriate/insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they must report this to the head teacher so that the appropriate process can be followed.

Parents:
Parents at the school will be informed of this policy statement.

Parents should be aware that the school has a Social Networking policy which is available to read on the school website.

School staff are prohibited from posting any content on social networking sites that concern the school, staff, the pupils or families of Shirley Infant/Junior School.

Friends of Shirley Infant school are permitted to create Year Group Facebook pages only. It is recommended that parents forming groups on 'Facebook' or other social networking sites must refrain from commenting on the school, staff, pupils and families. Members of the group should feel able to refer any comments of concern to the Head of School or a school governor in confidence. Any comments that are made on Shirley School year group Facebook pages that are considered inappropriate or detrimental to the school or staff members reputations will be removed promptly.

Policy Breaches:
Staff found to be in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure and the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules, with potential sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Information shared through social networking sites, even on private spaces, is subject to copyright, data protection, freedom of information, equality, safeguarding and other legislation.

Where staff work in roles that are governed by professional bodies/professional codes of conduct; the professional rules relating to social networking applied to them may be more stringent than those within this Policy.