

Dilton Marsh Church of England Primary School

Social Media Policy

INTRODUCTION

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.

It is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community and our legal responsibilities.

However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance 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. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to and protected from legal risks
- That the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- That any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, volunteers, Governors and pupils

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Netmums.com Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

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 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Equalities, Child Protection and E-Safety Policies.

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PRACTICE

Social Networking Applications

26th March 2015

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or anti social behaviour policies
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, children or parents
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event.
- 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

Personal Use of Social Media

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in school related communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated Safeguarding Lead.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts
- 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, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate via Wiltshire Police Child Protection Team
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes
- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given
- If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out