



# ***Social Media Policy***

Warboys Community Primary School

Date policy adopted: November 2017

Date policy to be reviewed: November 2018

## Warboys Community Primary School

### SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

#### Introduction

Warboys Community Primary School, the governors and staff fully recognise the contribution the school makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that the safety and protection of all students is of paramount importance and that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm. We believe that the school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes all students' social, physical, emotional and moral development. Warboys Community Primary School understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our students against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our students about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

#### Definitions for this policy

Warboys Community Primary School defines "social media" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including but not limited to:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter
- Snapchat
- Mobile TV applications such as Sky Sports

Social Media sites such as 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' state that children should be 13 years of age to use them (this was initially developed from American law). Therefore, no primary age children should be using or accessing these types of social media sites in a primary school.

Warboys Community Primary School defines "cyber bullying" as any use of social media or communication technology to bully an individual or group.

Warboys Community Primary School defines "members of the school community" as any teacher, member of support staff, student, parent / carer of student, governor or ex-student.

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example: from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.

Whilst recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Warboys Community Primary School staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media.

This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, MySpace), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as Flickr, Instagram and YouTube. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

The policy is based around 5 key areas

1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.
3. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.
4. Comments posted by parents/carers.
5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.

#### **A. The use of social media sites by pupils whilst at school**

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) makes it clear to pupils what use of social media is allowed. This states that, 'Social network sites should never be accessed/used within school'.

#### **B. Use of social media sites by employees in a personal capacity (Appendices 1)**

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.

Staff will be advised as follows:

That they familiarise themselves with social network sites' privacy settings in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended. It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set to 'friends only', irrespective of use/purpose

That they do not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:

- Bring the school into disrepute;
- Post pictures or videos
- Lead to valid parental complaints;
- Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees;
- Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors
- Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children
- Contravene current National Teacher Standards

At the present time the head teacher strongly discourages any member of staff to form online friendships or enter into communication with parents/carers as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised.

- That they do not form online friendships or enter into online communication with pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised, and/or safeguarding allegations being raised
- That they should not post pictures or negative comments about school events
- They should not post negative comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including Governors
- They should never disclose sensitive, private or confidential information across private messaging
- That they consider others' privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory e.g. politics and religion, which could result in their professional reputation being compromised.
- That they consider what they 'like', 'share' or 'follow' on social media sites e.g. politics and religion, which could result in their professional reputation being compromised.
- That they consider the pictures/videos they upload or post on a social media site and how this may portray them in their professional role working with children
- That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action

Inappropriate use by employees should be referred to the Head teacher in the first instance.

### **C. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education**

All social media services must be approved by the Head teacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

### **D. Comments posted by parents/carers on social media sites**

Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media via this policy (in particular when their child joins the school), the school website, letter and school newsletters.

Parents/carers are asked not to post images (photos and videos) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured.

Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media.

Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.

Parents should not form online friendships or enter into online communication with employees, as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised

### **Procedure the School will follow if inappropriate use continues**

The school will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the School considers inappropriate, the School will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the school's concerns to you in writing, giving the parent/carer a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.

#### **E. Dealing with incidents of online (cyber) bullying**

The schools Online Safety and/or Anti Bullying Policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear.

Page 5 of DfE's 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' indicates that the school can take action against incidents that happen outside of school if it:

1. Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
2. Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
3. Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate would be covered by this irrespective of when/where the post was made.

At Warboys Community Primary School we encourage students to take a SMART approach to social media behaviour:

- Safe – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online. Follow age restriction rules.
- Meeting – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents / carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.
- Accepting – We advise that students only accept emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.
- Reliable – We teach students about the dangers of believing everything they see online.
- Tell – We encourage students to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

## **Safeguarding of Children**

### **Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy**

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records. Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their own records during the school day.

POLICY REVIEW:

The School will review as appropriate, and at a minimum once in a school year, any sanctions applied in the context of this policy.

**Date adopted: November 2017**

**Date due for review: November 2018**

## **Social Networking: A guide for Trainee Teachers and NQT's**

### **Procedures:**

i. Under the data protection act of 1998 school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders. Photographs will be stored on the school network which is pass word protected

until the school ceases to operate, should this occur then all photographs will be shredded or deleted from the school network.

ii. The school's digital cameras must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit). Photographs are printed in the setting by staff and images are then, photos/ vidoes are removed from the camera memory.

iii. Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and learning and displayed in school and in albums or a child's development records for children and parent carers, governors, OFSTED (on the password protected area of the school website), to look through.

iv. Often photographs may contain other children in the background.

v. Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending. Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites. (See Policy above).

vi. On occasion the school might like to use photographs / vidoes of children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote the school via the website etc, however in this instance; specific parental permission will be required.

vii. Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school. Visitors may only use their phones in the foyer or outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.

viii. The use of cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets and nappy changing areas.

ix. Staff are asked not to make personal calls during their working hours. However in urgent cases a call may be made or accepted if deemed necessary and by arrangement with the Head teacher.

x. All school cameras and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.

xi. All staff phones should be switched off and out of sight during lesson times and only accessed and used in 'non pupil' areas such as the staff room.

This policy will form part of the induction for all staff annually (each September) and will be shared with new staff who join the school during the academic year.