



Social Media Policy

Introduction.

The school policy for Social Media was developed and agreed by the whole staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The policy was approved and ratified by the Governing Body during the summer term 2013.

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Skype. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications through PCs, phones, tablets and games consoles bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways but also lead to a number of issues of acceptable usage.

This policy and associated guidance are intended to advise school leadership and staff on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. The use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children and young people. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide balance in supporting innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Aims:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks.
- That the reputation of the school and its stakeholders is not adversely affected.

Scope

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

The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose, regardless of whether the school representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- **Blogs**, for example Blogger
- **Online discussion forums**, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as **Facebook**
- Media sharing services, for example **YouTube**
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example **Twitter**

All stakeholders should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, is 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 Equality and Diversity Policy.

Use of Social networking sites in worktime

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the head teacher.

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on the school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Ambleside Primary School expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Terms of Use

Social Networking applications:

- 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 for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- 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 bullying and harassment policies.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils 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 unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the head teacher or that person.
- 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.

- 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.

Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites.
- This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Nor should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area 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 teacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school.

Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking

- **No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites.** This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen.

http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the pupil using a mobile phone.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

Parents

The school will investigate any reports where the school has been brought into disrepute or any bullying of school staff has occurred on social media websites.

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, he/she should:

Record the disclosure in line with the school's child protection policy.

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 Head teacher will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the safeguarding team at the Local Authority and/or the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.

If disclosure is from a child, follow Child Protection Policy will be followed until the police investigation has been carried out.

Cyber Bullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Ambleside Primary School aims to protect itself from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access. Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.

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

This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

1. A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and texts from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.
2. A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using MSN and Facebook. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.
3. A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is the tricky one. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the schools recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.
4. Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's anti bullying policy.
5. If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment

This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

Related Policies

- Acceptable use of IT Resources
- ICT E-Safety and use of the Internet
- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- Safe guarding
- Data Protection
- Equality Policy
- Whistle blowing
- Disciplinary
- Grievance / complaints

Role of the Head Teacher and Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the school complies with legislation, and that this policy and its related procedures and action plans are implemented.

The governing body has a watching brief regarding the implementation of this policy.

The head teacher is responsible for implementing the policy; for ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and are given appropriate training and support.

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in the same ways that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the head teacher and governing body.

Racial Equality & Equal Opportunities Statement

All children have equal access and inclusive rights to the curriculum regardless of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability or ability. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals. Ambleside Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

All staff have equal access and inclusive rights to their work regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability or ability. Ambleside Primary School is committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment and to achieve their full potential. Policies are available on each of these that expand on this further.

Accessibility of policy documents

Parents and carers are welcome to ask for further information about any policy matter. Copies of all current School policies are available for parents and carers to read. A copy of each policy is displayed in the School lobby and all policies can also be consulted online via the School website at www.amblesideprimaryschool.co.uk. The School will try to arrange for the translation or summary of a document when this is requested by a parent or carer whose first language is not English.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in the Autumn term 2015.

