



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

At the time of publishing the following roles were held:

Designated Safeguarding Lead	Fiona Sweetman
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Lynn Harrison
Designated Teacher for looked-after or previously looked-after children	Fiona Sweetman
Governor with Safeguarding responsibility	Philip Prince

Date Policy adopted by Governors	
Review date	
Review schedule	Annually
Review responsibility	Curriculum & Pastoral Sub Committee
Signed (Head)	Signed (Chair of Governors)

REVIEW SHEET

The information in the table below provides details of the earlier versions of this document and brief details of reviews and, where appropriate amendments which have been made to later versions.

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	April 2019
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OVERVIEW

Social media plays an important role in the lives of many people and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat and so on are now widely used. These sites enable parents and carers to access information about the school efficiently and easily and allow people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. In addition, the school recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss or share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. However, there is also the potential that such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff which could cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals or the school which would not be justified.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to:

- give clarity to the way in which social media is to be used by staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers at Irthington Village School;
- encourage social media to be used in a beneficial and positive way;
- safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- safeguard the reputation of the school;
- set out the procedures the school will follow where it considers social networking sites have been used inappropriately or unlawfully to the detriment of the school, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the school.

There are four key areas:

- A. Use of social networking by staff and governors in a personal capacity
- B. The use of social networking sites by pupils
- C. Comments posted by parents or carers
- D. Dealing with incidents of inappropriate use of social media

POLICY

Roles and responsibilities

All Staff

A. Use of social networking by staff and governors in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff and governors 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 must not add parents, pupils or ex pupils as ‘friends’ into their personal accounts once they are in employment at the school.
- Staff and governors are recommended not to use their own personal twitter accounts to retweet pictures or posts from other members of the school community.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload photos of pupils, pupils’ work or school events online other than via school owned social media accounts.
- Staff and Governors **must not** post any comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues.
- Staff **must not** use social networking sites or mobile phones within lesson times.
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teachers’ Standards or their professional position within the school community.
- Staff and Governors should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Inappropriate use of social networking sites by staff or Governors should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.

All Pupils

B. The use of social networking sites by pupils

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child, it is generally the case that children under the age of 13 are NOT permitted to register on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and so on. Creating an account for a child with false information about their age is a violation of the terms of use of such sites.

Other networking sites aimed at children should not be used at school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the lesson.

The school’s Acceptable Use Policy outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply also to the use of social networking sites.

All Parents and carers

C. Comments posted by parents or carers

Parents and carers are reminded of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the website, newsletters, closed PTA Facebook group, SchoolsApp, letters, phone calls, emails and verbal discussion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

- Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event without the express permission of the parents of other pupils.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents should not post malicious, offensive or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community, (fellow parents or carers, pupils, members of staff or governors).
- Parents should not post racist, sexist or homophobic comments or comments which threaten violence.
- Parents should ensure that their children are using social networking or internet sites in an appropriate manner. It is expected that parents explain to their children what is acceptable to post online and model this standard of online behaviour. Parents and carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to social networking.

SCHOOL RESPONSE

D. Dealing with incidents of inappropriate use of social media

Inappropriate use of social media by staff

See section A

Inappropriate use of social media by parents or carers

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 or carer 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 you a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed.
- Contact the police where the school feels it is appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime, (such as harassment), has been committed; or in cases where the post 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.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

All parents, carers, staff and governors will be asked to sign the code of conduct accompanying this policy.

The Governing Body will review this policy on an annual basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents.

All parents and staff will be asked to read this code of conduct and sign the agreement form should any changes be made.



Irthington Village School Social Media Code of Conduct Parent / Carer Declaration Form

I parent of
declare that I have received, read and understand the Social Media policy of Irthington Village School.

I understand my obligations under this code of conduct and agree to comply fully with them whilst my child is a pupil at Irthington Village School.

The school will not tolerate any of the following:

- Sending abusive messages to parents, pupils, governors and members of staff;
- Sending abusive messages about parents, pupils, governors and members of staff;
- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about other parents, pupils, members of staff, governors or the school;
- Using social media to complain or post any grievances about the school's values and methods.

Signed: Date:
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Irthington Village School Social Media Code of Conduct Staff / Governor Declaration Form

I declare that I have received, read and understand the Social Media policy of Irthington Village School.

I understand my obligations under this code of conduct and agree to comply fully with them whilst I am employed at Irthington Village School.

The school will not tolerate any of the following:

- Sending abusive messages to parents, pupils, governors and colleagues;
- Sending abusive messages about parents, pupils, governors and colleagues;
- Posting any 'statuses', defamatory or otherwise, about parents, pupils, other members of staff, governors or the school;
- Using social media to complain or post any grievances about the school's values and methods.

Signed: Date:
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