

Wallace Fields Infant School and Nursery



Social Media Policy

Wallace Fields Infant School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Reviewed: Autumn 2018

Next Review: Autumn 2021

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Wallace Fields Infant School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four 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. Comments posted by parents/carers**
- 4. Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

The school's 'Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)' outlines the rules for using computing in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used, then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate. Parents will give permission for children to access these sites in school as well as permission for images of their child / child's work to be included on the site. (See social Media consent form)

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child, it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram.

2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

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.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

Staff must comply with the Online Safety policy and the Acceptable Use Policy at all times. The only acceptable method of contact is via the use of school email accounts or telephone equipment.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate use of social media which may bring themselves, the school or the school community into disrepute. Staff should adopt the highest security settings on any personal profiles they have.

Staff should exercise caution in use of social media or any other web based presence they have. This includes written content, videos or photographs and views expressed either directly or by 'liking' certain pages or posts or following certain individuals or groups.

Staff must be vigilant when using dating websites/apps where staff could encounter pupils or ex pupils.

Staff must not make contact with pupils or ex pupils, or initiate/accept friend requests on any social media platform with pupils or ex pupils. Staff must not communicate with pupils/students or ex pupils via social media or text.

Staff should not make contact with a child's family member, accept or initiate friend requests or follow a child's family member's account on any social media platform.

School acknowledges that staff who are also parents may wish to make contact with other parents, who are friends, over social media. Staff must exercise caution and professional judgement in these circumstances and should not have any contact with pupils' family members via social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their professionalism.

Mobile phones and personally-owned devices such as tablets may not be used during lessons or formal school time. The Bluetooth functionality of a mobile phone or tablet should be switched off at all times.

The camera and filming functions of personal mobile devices must not be used in school, on school trips or on official school business.

Mobile phones and personally-owned mobile devices brought in to school are the responsibility of the device owner. School accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of personally-owned mobile phones or mobile devices.

In addition:

- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use)
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action

3. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. 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. Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

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

4. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and a formal written communication.

The Governing Body understands that, “There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged.”

Furthermore, “Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (*an individual*) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (*an individual*) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (*an individual’s*) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (*an individual in their*) business, trade, office or profession.” (National Association of Head teachers)