

Howard Park Community School
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media sites play an important role in the lives of many people, including children. We recognise that social networking can bring many benefits, but there are also potential risks. The aim of this document is to give clarity to the way in which social media sites are to be used by Howard Park Community School: pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and other volunteers. All members of the school community should bear in mind that information they share through social media and networks, even if it is on private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and UK libel and defamation laws.

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

Pupils should not access social networking sites whilst at school without first obtaining permission from a member of staff. Pupils and parents will be reminded that the use of some social media sites is inappropriate for Primary aged pupils

B. Use of social media sites by employees in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking accounts. It is important that they protect their professional reputation, and that of the school, by ensuring that they use their personal sites in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be advised as follows:

1: 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

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

- Bring the school into disrepute;
- 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

3: That they do not form online friendships or enter into communication with parents/carers as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised

4: 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

5: That they should not post pictures of (without the Head teacher's consent) or negative comments about school events

6; 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 Headteacher in the first instance. Employees should refer to the publication Simple Guidance for Staff in Education Settings on the Use of Social Network Sites, which is contained in the Staff Handbook.

D. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education

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

E. 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.

1: 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
2: Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media

3: Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community or make derogatory comments about staff members or children. Any such comments that come to the attention of the school will be referred to the governing body, who may take appropriate action in the interest of pupils, staff and the school.

E: Use of social media sites by school governors in a personal capacity

Governors should not engage with any aspects of school life on social media with parents. This can easily lead to unnecessary or unfair criticism. The school manages its social media presence through official accounts including FOBs. If a governor is engaged by a parent regarding a post on social media, then their first action should be to recommend that the person involved contacts school directly. If that can't be achieved, the governor could inform school on their behalf with the facts but no personal opinion.

F. Dealing with incidents of online (cyber) bullying (adults and children)

There are four UK statutes that cover the use of Internet technology in relation to bullying. All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy. The school can take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:

- 1: Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- 2: Poses a threat to a member of the school community including an adult working in the school.
- 3: Could adversely affect the reputation of the school, or its employees/governors.

Where appropriate, legal action will be taken by the school's governors.