

School Social Networking Policy
ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL
Reviewed by SBM & DHT : June 2019
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Rationale

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Safeguard all children
- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site. Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are 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 Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies. Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media

Use of Social Media in practice

1. Personal use of social media

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications from children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Abbotswood Junior School. If staff are communicating with adults who are parents, no work-related issues may be mentioned.

- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection (Deputy Headteacher – Pastoral)
- As a Junior school where our children are all aged up to 11, there are a great many limits on what social media they are permitted to use, many have a minimum age limit of 13. If you receive a 'friend request' from a child at Abbotswood you can report their account using Facebook's reporting form by going to the help section and typing 'Report an underage child'.
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- Staff are reminded that private groups set up on social networking sites by members of the school community (parents, children or staff) are discouraged. They provide a potential risk to confidentiality, raise concerns around safeguarding and can lead to misunderstandings. If you are invited to join one of these groups we would encourage you to report them to the school who will issue advice to the person who set the group up.

2. School-sanctioned use of social media

- When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:
 - Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
 - Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
 - Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT.
 - Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media.
 - All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the About or Info page to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the school website.