



# Hemswell Cliff Primary School

## Social Media

<u>Policy Information</u>			
<b>Status:</b>	Recommended with Safeguarding	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Full Governors
<b>Cycle of Review:</b>	Annually	<b>Policy Ratified:</b>	March 2022
<b>Signed as accepted:</b>			

### 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, young people and vulnerable adults.

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 Hemswell Cliff Primary School.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Safeguard all children;
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected;
- Protect the school from legal risks;
- Ensure that any users are clearly able 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, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and any other comment streams.

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, Safeguarding and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

Governing Body: Full Governors

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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**

#### **Personal use of social media**

School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Hemswell Cliff Primary School

Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection - at Hemswell Cliff Primary School this is the Headteacher.

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 contact 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 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, and subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

### **Breaches of Policy**

#### **Informal Procedure**

Where an issue of conduct is of a relatively minor nature then it should, wherever possible, be resolved informally.

The informal meeting is an opportunity for the Headteacher to reiterate the standards of conduct expected and to draw a line under the matter. The employee should be given the opportunity to explain their actions including any possible mitigating circumstances. At the end of the discussion the employee should understand what standard of conduct is expected of them and that the matter will go no further.

The Headteacher may still have to carry out a brief investigation and would then have a further discussion with the employee to state any concerns and resolve the matter.

**Formal Procedure**

If, at this time, the Headteacher believes this issue is of a more serious nature then this will be dealt with under the formal disciplinary procedure. (See School Disciplinary Policy)

A record should be kept of the discussion and the employee provided with a copy. If in the future there are further issues then this may be used in evidence and it may also mean that it will be considered under the formal procedure.

In accordance with formal procedures this should be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after a reasonable period of time.