Greenfield Primary School

STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Approved by Governors (date) ....

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body ....……………………………..........

Chair of Governors

STAFF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to support staff, Teachers and Head teachers *(and within this policy will be referenced as employee(s) or school staff)*, based in Greenfield Primary School.

Application of this policy to School Governors

This policy also applies to School Governors as detailed below.

Whilst some aspects of this policy are clearly more targeted at school staff, many have equal application to governors. For example, the policy provides guidance for all on what is considered to be inappropriate use of social media/internet sites. All governors should ensure that they comply with the spirit of the policy.

Though governors would not be subject to the same disciplinary process as staff, there are still forms of redress available where a governor behaves in an inappropriate manner. The appropriate procedures would be followed in such cases.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the social media policy is to clarify how employees should conduct themselves when using all forms of social networking websites and blogs, whether conducted through the school's media, personal media and, in work time or in one's own time.

Employees wanting to create a work-related social media site must discuss this with and obtain the relevant approval from, the Head teacher.

If followed, it will guide employees on how to minimise the risk they may place themselves and pupils in, when they choose to write about their work or matters relating to the school and their personal lives. This in turn will minimise situations where safeguarding concerns could arise, employees' integrity or professional standing could be undermined, or the School and Local Authority brought into disrepute and professional relationships with colleagues and pupils compromised.

Additionally, adhering to the policy reduces the risk of employees inadvertently contravening sections of the Data Protection Act or falling foul of any breaches of confidentiality, privacy, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright laws.

This policy is not intended to prevent employees from using social media sites, but to make them aware of the risks they could face, when sharing information about their professional and/or personal life. Employees should be encouraged to report any concerns that they have regarding content placed by employees on social media sites to the Head teacher.

Social media can be defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking, resulting in a number of different activities.

These activities can include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining a profile page on social / business networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn
- Writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person / informational site
- Taking part in discussions in groups, on web forums or message boards
- Leaving product or service reviews on business websites or customer review websites
- Taking part in online polls
- Uploading multimedia on networking sites such as Instagram and Tumblr
- Liking, re-tweeting and commenting on posts of your own, another person or other social media account

<u>Employees</u>

- Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media sites, including likes/re-tweets, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, Yammer, WhatsApp etc.
- Employees should assume that everything that is written is permanent and can be viewed by anyone at any time.
- Employees should assume that everything can be traced back to them personally as well as to their colleagues, the School and parents.
- To avoid any conflict of interest, employees should ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and pupils are never listed as approved contacts. An exception to this may be if the child is the employee's own child, or relative.
- Information must not be posted that would disclose the identity of pupils.
- Employees must ensure content or links to other content does not interfere with their work commitments.
- Pupils must not be discussed on social media sites.
- Photographs or videos of pupils or their homes must not be posted on social media sites.
- Employees should not post information on sites, e.g. photographs and videos that could bring the School or the Local Authority into disrepute.
- Employees must not represent their own views/opinions as being those of the School or the Local Authority.
- Potentially false or defamatory remarks towards the School, the Local Authority, employees, pupils, pupils' relatives, School or Local Authority suppliers and partner organisations should not be posted on social media sites.
- Employees must not either endorse or criticise service providers used by the School or the Local Authority or develop on-line relationships which create a conflict of interest.
- When posting on social media sites employees must observe the requirements of the Equality Act and the Human Rights Act and must not use any offensive, obscene, derogatory, discriminatory language which may cause embarrassment to School, the Local Authority, employees, pupils, pupils' relatives, Council suppliers and partner organisations.

- Employees must not divulge any information that is confidential to the School, the Local Authority or a partner organisation.
- Employees must not upload, post, forward or post a link to any pornographic material (that is, writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit or arousing nature);
- Employees must not upload, post, forward or post a link with regards to any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil, and whether for you or us); or material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

This list is not exhaustive.

Employees should be aware that the use of social media sites in a manner contrary to this policy, including if others implicate you in a breach of any of the terms listed above may result in disciplinary action and in serious cases may be treated as gross misconduct, which itself could lead to summary dismissal.

Disciplinary

Any instances of "cyber bullying" will initially be addressed under the Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure and may result in disciplinary action.

Social Media Security

Employees should be mindful when placing information on social media sites that this information is visible to a large audience and could identify where they work and with whom, thereby increasing the opportunity for false allegations and threats. In addition, it may be possible through social media sites for children or vulnerable adults to be identified, which could have implications for their security.

Furthermore, there is the scope for causing offence or unintentionally causing embarrassment, for example if pupils find photographs of their teacher which may cause embarrassment and/or damage to their professional reputation and that of the School. In addition, it may be possible for other social media site users to identity where employees live, which could have implications for individual security.

Therefore, first and foremost consideration should be given to the information posted on social media sites and employees are advised to use appropriately the security settings on such sites in order to assist in limiting the concerns above.

Please see Appendix 1 – Facebook for school staff

Monitoring the use of social media websites

Employees should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under the Disciplinary Policy.

The School considers that valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been using social media websites when he/she should be working; or

- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.

Employee Groups/Networks

Employee groups can be created on social media sites such as Facebook. Creators of these groups are responsible for monitoring the content of the site and ensuring that it is appropriate and not in breach of any of the terms in this policy.

Appendix 1 - Facebook for school staff.

10 rules for school staff on Facebook

1. Change your display name – use your first and middle name, use a maiden name, or put your surname backwards instead

2. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, ensure that the image is professional

3. Be careful about tagging other staff members in images or posts

4. Don't accept friend requests from pupils on social media

5. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be just as happy showing your pupils

6. Don't use social media sites during school hours

7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, our school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there

8. Don't associate yourself with the school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)

9. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts. Anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile number) is able to find you using this information

10. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone. The app recognises Wi-Fi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same Wi-Fi connection (such as parents or pupils)

Check your privacy settings

› Change the visibility of your posts and photos to **'Friends only'**, rather than 'Friends of friends'. Otherwise, pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they're friends with anybody on your contacts list

› Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos** – go to bit.ly/2MdQXMN to find out how to limit the visibility of previous posts

› The public may still be able to see posts you've **'liked'**, even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster

› **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public

› Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people can't **search for you by name** – go to bit.ly/2zMdVht to find out how to do this

› Remember that **some information is always public**; your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender

What do to if…

A pupil adds you on social media

› In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile

› Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture

> If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents. If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages

> Notify the senior leadership team or the head teacher about what's happening

A parent adds you on social media

> It is at your discretion whether to respond. Bear in mind that:

- Responding to one parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other teachers at the school

- Pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in

> If you wish to decline the offer or ignore the message, consider drafting a stock response to let the parent know that you're doing so

You're being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

> **Do not** retaliate or respond in any way

> Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred

> Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it

> If the perpetrator is a current pupil or staff member, our mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents

> If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address any reasonable concerns or complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material

> If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a senior leader should consider contacting the police

Version	Date	Comment
V2	Date created: 1/3/2021 Review date: March 2024	A Gordon