

# Elmwood Infant and Nursery School

## Social Media Policy



**Reviewed: Spring 2019**



# Elmwood Infant School & Nursery

## Social Media Policy

**DATE REVIEW:** January 2019

**DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:** Spring 2022

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's policy on acceptable use of internet and e-mail, the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

**Please note:** All the examples shown in this policy are indicative and are not intended to be exhaustive.

### **1. Definition of social media**

- 1.1 For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video- and image-sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.
- 1.2 Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

### **2. Use of social media at work**

- 2.1 Employees must not use social media to express personal viewpoints of School Policy or Headteacher or Governor decisions.
- 2.2 Employees should not spend an excessive amount of time while at work using social media websites. They should ensure that use of social media does not interfere with their other duties. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on employees' productivity.
- 2.3 Employees must limit their use of social media to their official break times such as their lunch break and before and after their normal working hours (unless it is a genuine requirement of the employee's job).
- 2.4 Employees are only allowed to access social media websites, which are not blocked by the service provider, from the school's computers or devices *for* school related purposes.
- 2.5 The School understands that employees may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops, palm-top and hand-held devices, to access social media websites while they are at work. Employees must limit their use of social media on their own equipment to their official break times, such as their lunch break.

### **3. Monitoring use of social media during work time**

3.1 Communications using School facilities may be intercepted, recorded and monitored for business use and where appropriate for the detection and prevention of crime. This includes, but is not limited to, telephone calls, internet use, email and post.

The School considers that valid reasons for checking employees' internet usage include suspicions that employees have:

- 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.

3.2 The School reserves the right to retain information that it has gathered on employees' use of the internet.

3.3 Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.

### **4. Social media in your personal life**

4.1 The School recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of the School, employees must be aware that they can damage the reputation of the organisation if they are recognised as being one of our employees and are posting text, images (or both) that could be deemed inappropriate.

4.2 Employees should review their social media history and should delete any inappropriate historic posts or pictures which could damage their professional reputation.

4.3 Employees should review their social network accounts, particularly the content and privacy settings in place.

4.4 Even if an employee does not specifically name the School on social media, it is likely that some viewers will know who they are employed by and as such communications still have the potential to bring the organisation into disrepute.

4.5 Employees are allowed to say that they work for the School, which recognises that it is natural for its staff to sometimes want to discuss their work on social media. However, the employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the School's name.

4.6 If employees do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the education sector), they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

4.7 Photographs of pupils must not be uploaded or shared by employee's through social media

4.8 Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must not:

- have the potential to bring the School into disrepute, for example:
  - by criticising or arguing with parents, colleagues or rivals;
  - by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
  - by posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
- breach confidentiality, for example:

- by sharing confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or pupils) or the School; or
- by discussing the School's internal workings (such as future plans that have not been communicated to the public, parents or pupils);
- breach copyright, for example:
  - by using someone else's images or written content without permission;
  - by failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or
- do anything that could be considered discriminatory, bullying or harassment of an individual or group, for example:
  - by making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
  - by using social media to bully or criticise another individual (such as an employee of the organisation); or
  - by posting images that are discriminatory or offensive, or links to such content.

## **5. Disciplinary action over social media misuse**

5.1 Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against the employee and/or the School. It may also cause embarrassment to the School.

5.2 In particular uploading, posting, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website or via email, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will amount to gross misconduct:

- pornographic material;
- a knowingly false or defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
- material which is potentially offensive, obscene, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the School, or its staff;
- online bullying of colleagues (see also section 6, Cyber Bullying);
- promotion of radicalisation and extremism;
- confidential information about the School, any of our staff or pupils (for which there is no express authority to disseminate);
- any other statement which is likely to create any liability (criminal or civil);
- material which breaches copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.

Any such action will be addressed under the Schools Disciplinary Procedure and is likely to result in summary dismissal.

- 5.3 Where evidence of misuse is found the School may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with its Disciplinary Procedure, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary such information may be handed to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.
- 5.4 Any use of social media by other members of staff in breach of this policy must be reported to the Headteacher. If a breach is made by the Headteacher, this should be reported to the chair of Governors.

## **6. Cyber Bullying**

- 6.1 Staff should never personally engage with cyberbullying incidents. Where appropriate, they should report incidents to the nominated person and/or seek support.
- 6.2 Staff should keep any records of the abuse – text, e-mails, voice mail, web site or instant message. If appropriate, screen prints of messages or web pages could be taken and time, date and address of site should be recorded though care needs to be taken when copying certain images.
- 6.3 Staff should inform the Headteacher of incidents at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.4 Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or colleague, the majority of cases will be dealt with most effectively under the relevant school disciplinary procedure.
- 6.5 Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, and reported to the police, the school will ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police inquiries.
- 6.6 Where pupils are found to have made unfounded, malicious claims against staff members, relevant and appropriate disciplinary processes will be applied with rigour, as is the case in relation to physical assaults.