

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Beech Hill Primary School acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites as a means of communication. The widespread availability and use of social networking brings with it opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. This policy provides the acceptable standards for the use of social networking for all school stakeholders, including all employees at Beech Hill Community Primary School, volunteers, governors and pupils. This policy should be read in conjunction with: Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Vulnerable People, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, the Whistleblowing Policy, Equality Information and Objectives and the Email and Acceptable Use Policy.

This policy covers the use of Social Networking Sites and Applications, such as, but not limited to: Twitter, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, MSN, You Tube, Bebo, My Space etc. It further includes: blogging, online discussion groups or social networking groups.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out clear guidance of the acceptable use of social networking sites.
- Ensure confidentiality of the school, staff and pupils is maintained at all times.
- Prevent the school from being exposed to legal risks.
- Avoid the potential of the school's reputation being adversely affected.
- Ensure that all school employees understand the consequences of failing to comply with the Social Networking Policy.
- Ensure the appropriate use of the school's resources.

### **Scope**

The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school-related purpose (any form of reference to the school, Luton Borough Council, colleagues etc. is classed as a school-related purpose). This is inclusive of representing the school in an official capacity – such as the school website.

## Responsibilities

### Governing Body/Headteacher Responsibilities

Luton Borough Council will provide guidance on updating this policy as and when appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to publicise and make this policy available to all current and future school employees, and to ensure that the standards within it are both monitored and enforced and to advise the Governing Body of any serious breaches of this policy.

It is the responsibility of both the Governing Body and the Headteacher to take corrective and disciplinary measures, as are necessary, when a breach of this standard occurs and to contact and co-operate with the police and any other law enforcement agencies where a breach of these standards may constitute a criminal act.

### Employee's Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the school employee to read and comply with the Social Networking Policy. School employees are reminded that they are bound by the School's Code of Conduct and Teaching Staff are further subject to the Teaching Agency Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers. Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Legislation 2006 school employees may be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the school has significant concerns or suspicions about an employee's conduct or behaviour. **Information stakeholders choose to share through social networking applications – even if they are on private spaces – are also still subject to copyright law, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Freedom of Information Legislation.**

It is with this in mind that all school stakeholders are reminded that:

**Everything posted online is public, even with the strictest privacy settings. Once something is online, it can be copied and redistributed. Therefore, assume that everything that is written is permanent and can be shared. Whilst stakeholders have the right to exercise their freedom of expression, this is only applicable to lawful conduct.**

School stakeholders are reminded that they should at all times:

- Have the highest standards of personal conduct (inside and outside of School).
- Ensure that their behaviour (inside and outside of School) does not compromise their position within the school.
- Ensure that their judgement and integrity should not be able to be brought into question.
- Ensure that their relationship with members of the community via social media, does not compromise their position within the school.

Any failure to abide by the Social Networking Policy will result in disciplinary action, in line with Luton Borough Council's Human Resources proceedings.

School stakeholders must alert the Governing Body and/or Headteacher where a breach of these standards is suspected or known to have occurred. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

## Safeguarding Children

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Stakeholders must abide by the agreed method of communication policies within school. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all school stakeholders. The key principles are:

- School stakeholders **must not** communicate, (including accepting 'friend' requests) with any current pupils of the school, or from Beech Hill Primary School or any other educational establishment, on social networking sites such as Facebook. This is applicable even if a stakeholder has permission from a pupil's parent/guardian. (This would not apply to school age pupils that an individual employee is directly related to, e.g. their children, niece or nephew). Stakeholders **should not** communicate with, including being 'friends' with, past pupils whilst they are below the age of nineteen.

These principles apply:

- Regardless of whether access occurs during or outside of contracted work hours.
- To all technology whether provided by the school or personally owned by the stakeholder.

## Unacceptable Use of Social Networking Sites/Applications

Through Social Networking Sites/Applications, stakeholders must not:

- Disclose private and confidential information relating to pupils, parents, other school employees/stakeholders, and their employment directly or the school. This also applies to any other educational establishment that the employee/stakeholder has worked within.
- Discuss or reveal any matters relating to the school, school employees/stakeholders, pupils or parents.
- Identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- Write abusive comments regarding current/previous school employees, pupils or parents/guardians.
- Write abusive comments which go against fundamental British values.
- Harass or bully school stakeholders or persons unrelated or related to the school through cyber bullying and social exclusion.
- View or update their personal site (on Facebook, Twitter etc.) during the working day, unless on a designated break. (This includes via a work or personal mobile telephone and/or iPad). By-proxy update their personal site (Facebook Twitter etc.) during their normal working day, and must ensure that

their social networking site/application is secure - at all times - from third parties.

- Access or share illegal materials.
- Promote personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- Be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to Beech Hill Primary School or Luton Borough Council.
- Accept 'friend requests' with any pupil(s)/former pupil(s) under the age of 18.
- Publish any content, which may be deemed as defamation or discrimination.
- Post any content which may bring the school's reputation into disrepute.
- Post any images of pupils from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee/stakeholder has worked.
- Without permission, post any images of school employees/stakeholders on social networking sites from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked.
- Set up and/or use an alias social networking account to circumvent the policy.
- Breach any of the schools other policies and procedures such as the School's Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy etc.
- Use social media platforms as a forum for raising and escalating concerns regarding the school or the Council. These concerns should be raised using the Whistle Blowing procedure.
- This list is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with all aforementioned applicable policies.

### **Social Networking Guidance for Stakeholders:**

- No stakeholder should interact with any pupil in the school, via any form of social media.
- No stakeholder should interact with any ex-pupil who is under the age of 18.
- No stakeholder should request access to a pupil's social networking site. Neither should they permit a pupil to access their social networking by accepting a friend request.
- It is illegal for an adult to communicate via social networking, giving their age and status information as that of a child (posing as a minor).
- Any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites during the working day should be reported to Natalie Carson, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- As social networking site use is not permitted for minors under the age of 13, stakeholders must report any knowledge of use to a member of the safeguarding team, via a referral form.

### **Social Networking Guidance for Pupils:**

- No pupil under the age of 13 should be accessing social networking sites.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones in school. In exceptional circumstances, where SLT have permitted a child to bring a mobile phone whilst travelling to school, the phone must be handed in at the front office.
- Pupils must not attempt to access a stakeholder's social media accounts. Attempts to do so will be reported to the DSL.

- School iPads/computers etc. must not be used to attempt to access social media sites.
- Any attempts to breach firewall settings will result in a ban on independent access to ICT equipment; usage will be closely supervised.
- Any concerns around cyber bullying will be reported to a trusted adult immediately.
- Beech Hill Primary School has a zero tolerance policy in respect of cyber bullying.

Child Protection Guidance: If concerns are raised that any stakeholder is using social networking in an inappropriate manner, they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Refer the matter to the LADO and follow LADO advice and guidance.
- Where a disclosure has come from a parent/carer, reassure them and ensure that they understand the process involved.
- If the disclosure has come from a member of staff/stakeholder, try to maintain confidentiality.

## **Use of School Equipment**

Upon receipt of a Laptop/iPad you will be asked to sign the following declaration:

- I acknowledge that I have received a Beech Hill Laptop/iPad. I accept that the Laptop/iPad is in good working condition. I undertake to be responsible for the Laptop/iPad, to take care of it and return it to Beech Hill upon termination of my employment. The Laptop/iPad has been issued to me for work-related use. It will be used solely by me or other work colleagues when agreed. It will not be used by other family members or friends.
- I will check with my insurance company to make sure the laptop is covered by my insurance policy, should I choose to take it home. I will only remove the laptop/iPad from school once I know that I am covered by my insurance.
- If there is any damage caused to the Laptop/iPad, which is inflicted by me and is not covered by the warranty, I will be responsible for the cost of the courier and the repair quote.

## **Further information**

This policy should be read and adhered to in line with current GDPR legislation. In the event of a breach of this policy, a report must be submitted to the school Data Protection Officer immediately for recording and identification purposes.



## **Beech Hill Community Primary School**

# **SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY**

I have received, read and understood the contents of Beech Hill's Primary School's Social Network Policy and will act in accordance with this policy. I understand that this is a condition of my employment with Beech Hill Primary School.

Name:  
*(please print clearly)*

Signed:

Date: