



# Parklee Community Primary School

*Wardour Street, Atherton, Manchester M46 0AR*

## Social Media Policy

**Date: March 2017**

**Review Date: March 2018**

This policy has been written in line with guidance from Wigan Council under the 'Social Media Policy for Employees in Schools' January 2014.

Social media sites play an important role in the lives of many people, including children. We recognise that social networking can bring many benefits, but there are also potential risks. The aim of this document is to give clarity to the way in which social media sites are to be used by Parklee Community School: pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and other volunteers. All members of the school community should bear in mind that information they share through social media and networks, even if it is on private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and UK libel and defamation laws.

### **A. The use of social media sites by pupils whilst at school**

Pupils should not access social networking sites whilst at school without first obtaining permission from a member of staff. Pupils and parents will be reminded that the use of some social media sites is inappropriate for Primary-aged pupils.

### **B. Use of social media sites by employees in a personal capacity**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking accounts. It is important that they protect their professional reputation, and that of the school, by ensuring that they use their personal sites in an appropriate manner. Staff will be advised as follows:

That they familiarise themselves with social network sites' privacy settings in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended. It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set at an appropriate level on any social media sites, irrespective of use/purpose. Staff are advised to opt out of public listings in order to protect their own privacy.

That they do not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:

- Bring the school into disrepute
- Lead to valid parental complaints
- Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees
- Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors
- Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children
- Contravene current National Teaching Standards

To be cautious if they choose to invite work colleagues to be 'friends' on personal social media sites as this may blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain a professional working relationship if for example too much 'personal' information is known.

That they do not form online friendships or enter into online communication with pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised, and/or safeguarding allegations being raised.

Employees should not share personal information with pupils. They must not have contact through any social media sites with any pupil whether from their current school establishment or another unless that pupil is a family member.

Staff should decline all 'friend requests' they receive from any pupil or young person to whom they have acted in a position of trust whether in their current school establishment or another.

That they should not post pictures of (without the Headteacher's consent) or negative comments about school events.

That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action

Inappropriate use by employees should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance.

Employees should refer to the publication '25(b) Social Media Policy for Employees in Schools – January 2014' by Wigan Council for further guidance.

### **C. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education**

All social media services must be approved by the Headteacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

### **D. Comments posted by parents/carers on social media sites**

Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media via this policy (in particular when their child joins the school), the school website, letters, school newsletters and class assemblies.

Parents/carers are asked not to post images (photos and videos) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured.

Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media.

Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.

### **E. Dealing with incidents of online (cyber) bullying**

There are four UK statutes that cover the use of Internet technology in relation to bullying. All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. The school can take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- Poses a threat to a member of the school community
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school, or its employees/governors

Where appropriate, legal action will be taken by the school's governors.

All employees have a personal responsibility for their online behaviour and ensuring their use of social media falls within appropriate professional boundaries.

Any inappropriate use of social media by employees which breaches this policy may be treated as misconduct under the schools Disciplinary Procedure for Employees in Schools and could potentially constitute gross misconduct which could result in employment being terminated. If this involves a young person under eighteen years of age, an employee could be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service and risk being barred from working with children and vulnerable adults.