

# Kingsthorpe Village Primary School



## Social Media Policy

| Version number | Purpose            | Lead Person       | Date produced  |
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## **Social Media Acceptable Usage Policy**

### **Introduction**

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that such sites bring risks but equally there are many benefits to be reaped.

Kingsthorpe Village Primary School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of the school community with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

There are four key areas:

**A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**

**B. Use of social networking by staff and Governors**

**C. Comments posted by parents/carers**

**D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

### **Scope**

Social media and networking activities includes participation in social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr and LinkedIn, blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages) and posting material, images or comments on sites such as YouTube.

The policy applies to pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Kingsthorpe Village Primary School. It also provides guidance for parents.

### **Key Principles**

- Everyone at Kingsthorpe Village Primary School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.
- It is important to protect everyone at Kingsthorpe Village Primary School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at Kingsthorpe Village Primary School considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.
- Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted, unless it is part of pupil education or part of a support role. In both cases, it must have the prior approval of the Head Teacher.

### **A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of

the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two.

### **B. Use of social networking by staff and Governors**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff and Governors will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

- Staff and Governors must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff and Governors are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff and Governors **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Board.
- Staff and Governors **must not** post information or opinions about Kingsthorpe Village Primary School or any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.
- Staff **must not** use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff and Governors should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
- Inappropriate use by staff and Governors should be referred to the Head Teacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

**In addition**, the following are **not considered acceptable** at Kingsthorpe Village Primary School:

- The use of the school's name, logo or any other published material without written prior permission from the Head Teacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- Making derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Giving out personal information which may compromise safety and security.

### **Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles. Where it is found that there has been a breach of this policy, it may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Additional Guidelines for Staff and Governors**

- *Always adhere to school's Acceptable use of ICT Policy*
- *Photographic material and/or video footage that includes pupils must NOT be taken using your PERSONAL equipment (e.g. mobile phones or tablets) unless instructed by a member of senior leadership.*
- *Remember posts/tweets/blogs are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.*
- *Online posts and descriptions should portray you in a professional manner.*
- *Do not post personally identifiable student information of any kind, including personal information and photographs or images.*
- *No tagging of other staff without their permission.*
- *Do not post confidential information about KVPS students, staff or the school.*
- *Use of profanity or threatening language is forbidden.*
- *Under no circumstances should negative comments be made about students, parents or other staff.*
- *Be respectful of the opinions of others in your posts or comments.*
- *Do not post personal information about current or past members of staff.*
- *Do not post your personal information on the school social media platforms.*
- *When posting personal opinions please remember that you are representing the school.*
- *Passwords and other login information must be confidential at all times and kept in a safe place.*
- *Staff and Governors are advised to ensure privacy settings of their personal social media accounts/pages are limited to 'friends'.*
- *Respect brand, trademark, copyright information and/or images of the school (if applicable).*
- *When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate. Always view where the hyperlink takes you before you share it.*
- *Users should not take credit for things they didn't create themselves or misrepresent themselves as an author or creator of something found online. Research conducted via the internet should be appropriately cited, giving credit to the original author.*

### **C. Comments posted by parents/carers**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

- *Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.*
- *Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.*
- *Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.*

### **D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Board will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter. (Appendix 1)

The Governing Board understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (*an individual*) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (*an individual*) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (*an individual's*) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (*an individual in their*) business, trade, office or profession." (source: National Association of Head Teachers)

### **Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy**

Children are not allowed to have mobile phones in school. If children bring a phone to school, the device should be stored safely by a member of school staff until the end of the school day.

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records in Early Years Foundation Stage.

**Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their own records during the school day (unless instructed by a member of senior leadership).**

### **Procedures**

- Under the General Data Protection Regulation (2018), the school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders. Photographs will be stored on the school network which is password protected until the school ceases to operate. Should this occur then all photographs will be shredded or deleted from the school network.
- The school's camera devices must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit).
- Photographs are printed in the setting by staff and images are then removed from the device memory.
- Photographs of children may be taken and used in accordance with parental consent obtained via the General Permission Form.
- Often photographs may contain other children in the background.
- Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending.
- Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites. (See Policy above).
- Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school (unless with specific permission from the Head Teacher).
- **Visitors may only use their phones in the foyer or outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a device inappropriately or photographing children.**
- The use of camera devices and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets.
- Staff are asked not to make personal calls during their working hours. However, in urgent cases a call may be made or accepted if deemed necessary and by arrangement with the Head Teacher.
- All school camera devices and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.

Draft Communication

**Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Site**

Dear Mr/Mrs.....

It has come to the attention of the Governing Board that inappropriate comments regarding the school/members of the school community have been made on a social networking site.

As these comments do not comply with the expectations set out in the school's Social Networking Policy you are respectfully asked to remove them from the website.

We would encourage you to enter into productive communication with the school in order to resolve any outstanding differences. The school has an 'open door' policy with regard to dealing with parental communication and there are also policies in place such as the Complaints Policy if required.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governing Board