Social Media Policy

Date of next policy review	September 2024
Name of person responsible for this policy	Christopher Fulton
Issued to	Staff, governors, parents
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Introduction

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 and we have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

The aim of this document is to give clarity to the way in which social media sites are to be used by the Victoria Primary School community: 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.

Key roles and responsibilities

- The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy and procedures of Victoria Primary School.

- The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds

- The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

- The Principal will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures of Victoria Primary School.

- Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Social Media Policy and for ensuring pupils do so also.

- Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child /children at home.

- Parents and carers will be expected to promote safe social media behaviour.

The School's Online Safety Team and Network Manager

The school's Online Safety team consists of:
- Every teacher.
- ICT Lead Teacher – Mr Clarke.
- Principal – Mr Fulton

The school's network manager is C2K.

Definitions

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another. Victoria Primary School defines "social media" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including but not limited to:

- Blogs.
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com.
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook.
- Media sharing services, such as YouTube.
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter.

Victoria Primary School defines "cyber bullying" as any use of social media or communication technology to bully an individual or group.

Victoria Primary School defines "members of the school community" as any teacher, member of support staff, pupil, parent / carer of pupil, governor or ex-pupil.

The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or be aware of all the latest forms of emerging media and platforms. This Policy covers the use of existing and any future social networking platforms. The existing 'E-Safety Policy' and 'Acceptable use of the Internet Policy,' also informs this policy.

Guidelines for pupils

- Pupils should not access social networking sites whilst at school. Pupils and parents will be reminded that the use of some social media sites is inappropriate for Primary-aged pupils.
- Pupils must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse, or defame other pupils, any member of staff or school in any way that brings disrespect to our school or individuals.
- Pupils and the wider school community should not post images or videos of other pupils, staff or members of our school community taken within school or at school events/ trips on any social media site without prior permission from the school.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in sanctions being administered in accordance with those detailed in our Positive Behaviour Policy.

Guidelines for staff

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 to 'friends only', irrespective of use/purpose
- 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 GTCNI Standards or the Code of Conduct for Staff
- Members of staff **must not** "friend" or otherwise contact parents / carers through social media if their only contact with these parents is as a result of their position within the school. This could lead to professional relationships being compromised. Staff will not accept "friend" requests if the relationship is purely staff/parent, and there is no previous or alternative relationship.
- 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
- That they should not post pictures of (without the Principal's consent) or negative comments about school events. Posting derogatory comments about pupils, parents or colleagues is never acceptable. Staff are required to uphold the reputation of the school, to maintain high standards in their own behaviour, and to uphold public trust in their profession.
- Teachers may not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of an E Safety lesson.
- That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Principal.

Comments posted by Parents/Carers

- 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, letter and school newsletters.
- Parents should not post pictures (taken on school premises or at a school event) of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites. In general, photographs, videos or any image of pupils, staff or any member of our school community must not be published on a personal or public web space without prior permission from the school.
- Parents should not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame other pupils, any member of staff or the school.

- Parents should raise queries, concerns or make complaints through official school channels. (In accepting a place at Victoria Primary School for their child, parents are agreeing to abide by the policies, practices and procedures of the school.)

Dealing with incidents of online (cyber) bullying

All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy and our E-Safety 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.

Be SMART Online
We encourage pupils to take a SMART approach to social media behaviour:
- **Safe** – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online.
  Follow age restriction rules.
- **Meeting** – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents / carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.
- **Accepting** – We advise that pupils only accept emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.
- **Reliable** – We teach pupils about the dangers of believing everything they see online.
- **Tell** – We encourage pupils to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Training of staff
- At Victoria Primary School, we recognise that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyber bullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at risk pupils.
- Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Social Media Policy as part of their new starter induction.
- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and on-going training as part of their development.