Hardingstone Academy

Social Networking Policy
2021 - 2022

We will always keep our eyes on the stars and our feet on the ground.

Scope: Hardingstone Academy	
Version: V 1	**Filename:** **HA Social Networking Policy**
Approval: From	**Next Review: Sept 2022** This policy will be reviewed yearly.
Owner: Hardingstone Academy	**Union Status:** Not applicable

Policy type:	
Non-statutory	Replaces Academy's current policy

Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The two with the widest use are Facebook and Twitter.

The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

These policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:
- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Facebook is targets at older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

'If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us'.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including staff, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity.

The requirement of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the school representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisation.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:
• Blogs, for example Blogger
• Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
• Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
• Media sharing services, for example YouTube
• 'Micro-blogging' applications for example Twitter

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Group's Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Use of Social networking sites in worktime
Use of social networking application in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless the Principal has given permission.

Social Networking as part of School Service
All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Principal or member of the SLT first.

Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity
It is possible that a high proportion of staff 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.

Use of social networking applications, which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association), does not need to be approved by the Principal. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out with the policy.

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives.

This includes, but is not limited to, public pacing applications such as open discussion forums and internally facing use such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Hardingstone Academy expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Terms of Use
Social Networking applications:
Guidelines are issued to staff:
- Staff must not use social networking sights to publish any content, which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute. Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment of the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.
- Social networking must not be used for the promotion of personal financial inter5s, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
- It must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff
- It must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies
- It must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- Staff should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, and parent or school activity/event unless prior pe4rmission has been obtained and agreed with the Principal.
- Staff must never add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts including past pupils
- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts
- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.

- Staff should use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Techers' Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Principal in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the Principal in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- No pupils should attempt to join a staff member's area on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Principal, Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day unless for direct school use (posting school information of the school Facebook page).
- Staff must share others' details to any other employee without permission from the person.
- Staff on no account must share other employees details to any parents.

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 most 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.

Guidance for Parents who use Social Networking.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to bullying.
- Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.

- In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body 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.

Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The schools Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll. By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Hardingstone Academy protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

The Governing Body understands that, 'there are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element of 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 (national Association of Headteachers).

Child Protection guidance

If the Principal receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner they should:

- Record the disclosure in-line with their child protection policy.
- Schools must refer the matter to the MASH team who will investigate via Northamptonshire County Council Police Child Protection Team.
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes.
- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- The MASH team will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action be taken until advice has been given.
- If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out.

This Policy will be reviewed September 2021.