Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Social Media Policy

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Contents:

Vision Statement

Introduction

Purpose

Scope

Vision Statement

At Holy Trinity we believe that all people are precious and honoured in God's sight. From this belief comes a determination for all within our community to experience life in all its fullness, as promised by Jesus.

We embrace the holistic development for all in our community so that they may flourish academically, emotionally, and spiritually.

All that we do is underpinned by the modelling and promotion of six core values. These are: Justice, Service, Perseverance, Gratitude, Compassion, Courage and build on previous values of Peace, Hope, Friendship, Respect, Honesty and Forgiveness.

We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigor, but sets them in a wider framework.

Introduction

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by all stakeholders: pupils, governors, visitors, parents, school staff and volunteers at Holy Trinity CE Primary. It will also provide guidance for parents.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

Blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, micro-blogging applications and virtual worlds. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, MSN, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Google Classroom.

All stakeholders 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 Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate with the school and Local authority Equality and Safeguarding Policies.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Holy Trinity CE Primary, its leaders and governors are not exposed to legal risks.
- The reputation of Holy Trinity CE Primary, staff and governors at the school are not adversely affected.
- All children are safeguarded.
- Our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of Holy Trinity CE Primary.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity. This policy covers the following key areas:

A. **The use of social networking as part of school service**
B. **Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking sites**
C. **Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking sites**
D. **Guidance for parents on using social networking sites**
E. **Cyber bullying**
F. **Child protection guidance**
G. **Dealing with incidents of cyber bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

A. **The use of 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 Headteacher first. 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 Headteacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy. School representatives must adhere to the Terms of Use below. The Terms of Use apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses 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. Holy Trinity CE Primary 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:

- Must not be used 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.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- 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.
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents.
- Must not be used by staff members to have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.
- Must not be used by staff members to identify themselves as a representative of the school.
- Must not be used to make references to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity/event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head Teacher.

- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

B. **Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking sites**

- Staff must store mobile phones out of sight of pupils at all times.
- Staff must not use social networking sites during contact time with pupils.
- Staff must never give out personal details of any kind which may identify them.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the highest level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should only use social networking sites in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites.
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18.
- No member of staff should request access to a pupil's area on a social networking site. Nor should they permit a pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- No member of staff should interact with any parent in the school on social networking sites.
- Staff should be extremely cautious about interacting with ex-parents in the school on social networking sites.
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links with valid reasons for staff to interact with parents or pupils on social networking sites, please inform the Headteacher in writing.
- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues, including members of the governing body.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher and named Child Protection officer in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.
- If required to use Google Classroom at home, staff will ensure they are not visible on camera and that they follow the Acceptable Use Policy.

C. **Guidance/protection for pupils on using social networking sites**

- No pupil under the age of 13 should be accessing social networking sites.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT for educational purposes and these rules apply to online learning using Google Classroom.
- All pupil mobile phones must be handed to a member of staff at the beginning of the school day. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using a mobile phone.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.
- 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 your class teacher as soon as it happens.
- Any incidents of cyber bullying by pupils will be dealt with in the strongest possible terms.

D. **Guidance for parents on using social networking sites**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking when choosing Hoy Trinity CofE Primary for their child.

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.

E. **Cyber bullying**

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Holy Trinity CofE Primary protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access. Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school. This can be a complex area, and these examples of bullying that originate outside of the school and the potential school response, might help with understanding:

- A child is receiving taunts on Facebook/Instagram or other social networking site and texts from an ex-pupil who left the school three months ago: *This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution*.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is generally at weekends using social networking sites. The pupils are in Y5: *The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of social networking sites outside the terms and conditions of the site (as the child is not 13) and that they are expected to ensure that the use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators failed to follow the school's recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues*.

F. **Child protection guidance**

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

- Record the disclosure in line with their Child Protection Policy.
- Refer the matter to the LADO, who will investigate via West Midlands Police Child Protection Team.
- Take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes, if the disclosure has come from a parent.
- Try to maintain confidentiality, if the disclosure has come from a member of staff.

The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is 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.

G. **Dealing with incidents of cyber 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. Once a disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's anti-bullying policy and/or behaviour policy. If parent/carers refuse to engage in the investigation process and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments. They will contact the parent officially and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy. It is presumed that parents agree to follow the school's policies when they choose to send their child to our school.

The Governing Body understands that 'There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where posting 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
- Disparage (*an individual in their)* business, trade, office or profession (National Association of Headteachers)