



# Social Media Policy

Broad Heath Community Primary School



Approved by:

[Jane Frankish]

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## 1. Introduction

As a member of Broad Heath Primary School, we all have a duty to uphold the ethos and values that the school stands for.

When using social media, employees of Broad Heath Primary School should remain respectful and professional. The lines between public and private can become blurred so assume that everything you write in your digital footprint, is permanent and can be viewed by anyone (including colleagues, Governors, parents and pupil and prospective and current employers) at any time. Also, assume that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as your colleagues and your school.

In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, Governors, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff. This principle applies to the use of social networking sites.

## 2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this document is to guide the judgements of all staff of Broad Heath Primary School using social networking sites, applications, games and other websites and the information that they provide through these by:

- Guiding staff to ensure that children are safeguarded
- Guiding staff to ensure that the school and themselves cannot be bought into disrepute.
- To ensure that the school is not exposed to legal and governance risk as a result of school employees using and providing information online.

2.2 This policy aims to ensure that employees are protected while using social media and feel empowered to contribute to collaborative online activity when it supports their role in the school.

2.3 This policy needs to be read in conjunction with Broad Heath's policies including, but not exclusive to:

- [Online Safety](#)
- [Remote Learning](#)
- [Acceptable Use policies](#)

- [Video Conferencing Policy](#)
- [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy](#)

### **3. Social Networking Site / Applications / Websites**

3.1 Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas and views.

3.2 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Tic Toc, Xbox Live, PlayStation Network YouTube.

3.3 The school website is open to public viewing and the same professionalism and conduct, as with social media, should apply when posting comments or blogs.

### **4. Staff Conduct**

4.1 The way in which school staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the school and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents of the school. In their use of social networking sites, staff should be aware that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.

4.2 Adequate precautions must be taken by school staff when using social networking sites/applications, both in vetting material that could be connected to them (through their own profile and information added about them) and through the use of appropriate security settings.

4.3 School employees should not be "friends" with current pupils/ex pupils under 18 years of age on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue.

4.4 It is recommended that management and school staff do not identify their school on social networking sites as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the school.

4.5 Staff can seek advice from their line manager on their personal use of social networking sites and/or report concerns about the inappropriate use of a social networking site/application by another member of staff.

4.6 When using email and the school website to communicate with pupils, e.g. about homework, remote learning, video conferencing please follow the guidance in the Remote Learning Policy.

4.7 Where pupils behave inappropriately with staff this should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team and dealt with through the school's pupil disciplinary process.

4.8 Staff political views are personal but can cause conflict. Sharing political views on online could draw unwanted challenge and upset. Staff should think very carefully about the views that they share.

### **5. Safeguarding**

5.1 The use of social networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people. Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- online bullying
- grooming, exploitation or stalking
- exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language
- encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking.

In order to mitigate these risks, there are steps you can take to promote safety on line:

- You should not use any information in an attempt to locate or meet a child.
- Ensure that any messages, photos or information comply with existing policies.

## **6. Action by employer: Inappropriate use of social media**

6.1 Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the lead safeguarding officer in the school/trust.

6.2 Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child.

6.3 With regard to personal safeguarding, you should report any harassment or abuse you receive online while using your work accounts.

## **7. Reporting, responding and recording cyberbullying incidents**

7.1 Staff should never engage with cyberbullying incidents. If in the course of your employment with this school, you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate or inflammatory written material relating to you, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without your permission, you should immediately report this to a senior manager at your school.

7.2 Staff should keep any records of the abuse such as text, emails, voicemail, website or social media. If appropriate, screen prints of messages or web pages could be taken and the time, date and address of site should be recorded.

## **8. Action by employer: Inappropriate use of social media**

8.1 Following a report of inappropriate use of social media, the senior manager will conduct a prompt investigation.

8.2 If in the course of the investigation, it is found that an employee submitted the material to the website, that employee will be disciplined in line with the school's disciplinary procedures.

8.3 The senior manager, where appropriate, will approach the website hosts to ensure the material is either amended or removed as a matter of urgency, ie within 24 hours.

## **9. Breaches of this policy**

9.1 Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy (or if complaints are received about unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached this policy) will be investigated in accordance with the school bullying or disciplinary procedure. The member of staff will be expected to co-operate with the school's investigation which may involve:

- handing over relevant passwords and login details
- printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content
- determining that the responsibility or source of the content was in fact the member of staff.

9.2 The seriousness of the breach will be considered including the nature of the content, how long the content remained visible on the social media site, the potential for recirculation by others and the impact on the school or the individuals concerned.

9.3 Staff should be aware that actions online can be in breach of the harassment/IT/equality policies and any online breaches of these policies may also be treated as conduct issues in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

9.4 If the outcome of an investigation leads to disciplinary action, the consequences will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures. Serious breaches could result in the dismissal of the employee.

9.5 Where conduct is considered to be unlawful, the school will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.

## **10. Monitoring and review**

10.1 If the manager reasonably believes that an employee has breached this policy, from time to time the school will monitor or record communications that are sent or received from within the school network.

10.2 This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis and, in accordance with the following, on an as-and-when-required basis:

- legislative changes
- good practice guidance
- case law
- significant incidents reported.

10.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may also, after consultation with the trade unions, be amended from time to time by the school/trust.

## **11. Legalisation**

11.1 Acceptable use of social networking must comply with UK law. In applying this policy, the school will adhere to its rights, responsibilities and duties in accordance with the following:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013

## **12. Conclusion**

The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, staff should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and the employer, whether for work-related or personal use; whether during working hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using the employer's equipment or using the employee's equipment. Staff should use discretion and common sense when engaging in online communication.