

## Delph Primary School



### **Social Media Policy**

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that social media brings many benefits, but there are also risks involved. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parents and school staff at Delph Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents/carers.

Appropriate and responsible use of social media is essential to ensure that:

1. The school is not exposed to legal risks.
2. The reputation of the school is not adversely affected.
3. Our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs e.g. Blogger
- Twitter
- Collaborative spaces e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram
- Online discussion forums e.g. netmums.com
- Media sharing services e.g. YouTube

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

The school's E-Safety Policy outlines the guidelines for using technology in school and these guidelines 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 and this should be approved by the Headteacher. Social media sites to be used in school include e.g. blogging sites and Twitter.

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 for many such sites. However, as part of school's approach to e-safety issues, pupils will be introduced to principles of how to behave safely and responsibly online, including social media sites.

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

**Guidelines issued to staff include:**

- Staff should **not** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents/carers as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff **should not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents/carers or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- 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 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 Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

Governors may also have their own social media accounts and it is important for them to protect their own reputation and the reputation of the school, by using social media in an appropriate and responsible way.

**Guidelines issued to governors include:**

- Governors should **not** use social networking in a way which conflicts with this policy or the school's high standards.
- Governors should **not** post comments about pupils, staff, colleagues or other members of the Governing Body.
- Governors should **not** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Inappropriate use by Governors should be referred to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors in the first instance and may lead to further action.

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

Parents and carers are encouraged to be responsible in their use of social networking, particularly in relation to school matters. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication e.g. prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is always the best means of ensuring positive outcomes for all concerned.

Where photos of pupils are taken at school events, parents/carers should only post pictures of children, other than their own, on social networking sites, where appropriate consent has been given by all parents/carers. This is to ensure that all pupils are protected by correct safeguarding procedures. This also applies to posting images of school staff. School will give appropriate photo opportunities for parents/carers to take pictures of their own child at school events.

School wants to work positively with all parents/carers and will address any complaints and concerns raised. Parents/carers wishing to raise any issues or concerns and/or make any complaints should do so through official school channels, rather than posting them on social networking sites. This includes posting comments on 'closed' social networking groups.

Concerns may be raised by speaking to the relevant member of staff and/or contacting the Headteacher or Chair of Governors (please refer to the school Complaints Policy).

Malicious or defamatory comments posted on social networking sites about any member of the school staff, governors, pupils or the school itself are not acceptable in resolving any issues and may result in further action being taken.

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

The school's Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes regarding any type of bullying in school, including online bullying.

If any member of the school community becomes aware of any inappropriate use of social media, connected to school, it is their responsibility to report this to the Headteacher immediately.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents/carers, the Headteacher / Governing Body will contact the parent/carer, asking them to remove such materials.

The Governing Body 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:

- a) expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- b) cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- c) lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- d) disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession."

(National Association of Headteachers)

This policy should be shared with all staff, governors and parents.

**Approved by:** Governors Curriculum & Standards Committee

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Review Date:** Spring Term 2020