Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board

**Social Media Template Policy**

**A guide for professionals working with young people**



Northamptonshire safeguarding children board believes that the use of information and communication technologies in schools and organisations brings fantastic benefits for young people. However recognising issues around e-safety and planning accordingly will help ensure appropriate, effective and safer use of electronic communications. The Acceptable Use Policies in this document will help schools and organisations effectively review, update and support e-safety concerns within your setting.

**Disclaimer**

Northamptonshire safeguarding children board makes every effort to ensure all information in the document is up to date. If errors are brought to our attention, we will aim to correct them as soon as possible. However NSCB and its employees cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of resilience on any content in the publication.



Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) is a broad term of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However the school community must be aware that most online games have a huge social media element to them. For example Minecraft, Movie Star planet and World of Warcraft to name just a few.

The school or organisation recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially round the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school or organisation, its staff, parents, carers and children.

* **For more information on setting up a safe Facebook or Twitter account follow:** [**http://www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals/for-you-as-a-professional/professional-reputation**](http://www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals/for-you-as-a-professional/professional-reputation)
* [**https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/article-repository/Reporting-to-social-media-sites-/**](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/article-repository/Reporting-to-social-media-sites-/) **- Scroll to the bottom the page**

**Organisational Control**

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**SLT**

* Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
* Developing and implementing the Social Media Policy
* Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents
* Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies required.
* Receive completed applications for social media accounts
* Approve account creation

**Administrator/Moderator**

* Create the account following SLT approval
* Store account details including passwords securely
* Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
* Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation.

**Staff**

* Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies.
* Attend appropriate training – for all your training needs contact [e-safety@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:e-safety@northamptonshire.gov.uk)
* Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school or organisations accounts.
* Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school.

**Managing the accounts**

* **Process for creating the account**

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them with their work, eg a history department having a Twitter account, or a “Friends of the school” Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a strong case to SLT or management which covers the following points.

* + The aim of the account
  + The intended audience
  + How the account will be promoted
  + Who will run the account (at least to members of staff should be named)
  + Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration from SLT or management an application should be approved or rejected. In all cases, SLT or management must be satisfied that anyone running the social media account on behalf of the school organisation has read and understood this policy and approved the appropriate training. This includes volunteers and parents.

**Monitoring**

* School or organisation accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week including holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to ideally within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at the weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge a receipt. Regularly monitoring is paramount as well as intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bulling or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school or organisation social media account.

**Behaviour**

* **The school or organisation requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.**
* **Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy.** Staff must not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School or organisations social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment or the school or organisation.
* Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school or organisation activity.
* If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the social media policy before responding.
* Unacceptable conduct (eg defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school or organisation and reported immediately to the relevant member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
* The use of social media by staff while at work my be monitored, in line with other school or organisation policies. The school or organisation permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media accounts. However where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.

The school or organisation will take appropriate action in the event of breaches to the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school or organisation will deal with the matter internally. If conduct is considered to be illegal, the school or organisation will report the matter to Police or other relevant agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

**Legal Considerations**

* Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
* Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach of confidentiality.

**Handling abuse**

* When acting on behalf of the school or organisation, handle offensive comments swiftly and sensitively.
* If a conversation turns or becomes offensive or unacceptable, school or organisations should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and preferably inform the audience what that action was taken.
* If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school or organisation protocols.

**Tone**

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

* Engaging
* Conversational
* Informative
* Friendly on platforms such as Facebook

**Use of images**

School or organisation use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly followed.

* Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the schools or organisations digital and video images policy. If any wishes not to be filmed or videoed there wishes must be respected.
* Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school or organisation owned social media accounts.
* Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on social media accounts. Students and staff should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.

If a member of staff accidently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

**Personal Use**

**Staff**

* Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. I all cases, where a personal account is used which links itself with the school or organisation; it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
* Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school or organisation are outside the scope of this policy.
* Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
* The school or organisation permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.

**Pupils/Young people**

* Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school or organisation on any personal social networking account.
* The schools or organisation should educate pupils/young people to be safe and responsible users of social media.
* Pupils/young people are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school or organisation. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the schools or organisations behaviour policy.

**Parents/Carers**

* Please refer to the parent/carer section within the Acceptable Use Policy document.

**Monitoring posts about the school or organisation**

* As part of the active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the internet for public postings about the school or organisation.
* The school or organisation should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a clear policy or process.

**Guidance on the use of personal Social Media accounts for staff:**

* Staff are discouraged from using images of themselves as “profile images”.
* Staff must adhere to (and agree to adhere to) the organisations or schools polices eg acceptable use, social networking, behaviour and anti bullying.
* Photographic material and/or video footage that include pupils must NOT be taken using PERSONAL equipment (Eg mobile phones, i-pads, tablets or camcorders) unless they have permission from the designated safeguarding officer or line manager.
* Remember posts/tweets/blogs are an extension of your classroom, what is inappropriate in the classroom is also deemed inappropriate online.
* Any posts etc should always portray you in a professional manner, remember that students and/parents and other stakeholders may see what you post or tweet.
* Always make sure you log out of your social media account when using a shared computer or device.
* There should be no tagging of any other staff members without there permission.
* Pupils or young people MUST NOT be in any photograph or video uploaded to social media or Youtube.
* Staff must not post confidential information about students, staff or the school or organisation.
* The use of profanity or threatening language is forbidden
* Under no circumstances should negative comments be made about students, parents, other staff, the school or organisation.
* Be respectful of the opinions of others in your posts or comments.
* Do not post personal information about yourself, current or past members of staff.
* When posting or tweeting etc please remember you are representing the school or organisation.
* Passwords and login information must remain confidential at all times and kept secure.
* Staff should only communicate with students through a school or organisation email address.
* Freinding/following/liking current students or young people is un professional and should not be done.
* Staff must have the highest of privacy settings on their social media accounts and check them regularly.
* When joining groups on social media or using hyperlinks please make sure the group of content is appropriate.
* Be wary of plagiarism online and don’t take credit for information that is not yours.

I agree to abide by all the points on the above document. And I understand that that it is my responsibility to ensure I remain up to date and read the schools or organisations e-safety policy.

**Print name: Job title:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

The above information has come from Sir Christopher Hatton School who has demonstrated outstanding work towards online safety. As well as SWGFL who provide a wide range of online safety resources

****

**Managing a school or organisation social media account**

* Check with a line manager before publishing content that may have implications for the school or organisation.
* Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
* Make it clear who is posting content
* Always use a professional and appropriate tone
* Be respectful
* Ensure you have permission to ‘share’ other people materials and acknowledge the author.
* Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
* Think before responding to comments, when in doubt, get a second.
* Seek advice and report any mistakes using the schools reporting process
* Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible.

**The don’ts**

* Don’t make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school or organisation into disrepute.
* Don’t publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
* Don’t breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
* Always consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don’t link to, embed or potentially inappropriate content.
* Don’t use social media to air grievances

**Acknowledgements**

* Sir Christopher Hatton School
* Wootton Primary School
* South West Grid for learning
* Think u know
* Childnet International