

Dunkirk Primary School: Social Networking Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body of Dunkirk Primary School:

Approval:	December 2017
Review:	In accordance with LA
To be reviewed by:	Heidi Hollis
Committee responsible:	P&PC

Introduction and Aims:

Dunkirk Primary School is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and MSN. The widespread availability and use of social networking brings 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, of equal importance is to ensure that the safety of users and the reputation of our school is not adversely affected in any way.

The purpose of this policy is to protect staff and advise 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.

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- Our school and organisations operating within (Fun Club) is not exposed to legal risks.
- The reputation of the school is not adversely affected.
- Our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Scope:

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, before/after school clubs (Fun Club), visitors, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity.

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

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs
- Twitter
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services, such as YouTube

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 Groups 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 applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher. **Twitter is used by identified staff in school for the school account.**

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 Head Teacher** first.

School representatives must adhere to the terms of use (see below). These 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. It is expected 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.

Social Networking Applications

Material published (with the permission of the Head teacher) **must not:**

- Include 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;
- Be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns;
- Be used in an abusive or hateful manner;
- Be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff;
- Breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies;
- Be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents.

Furthermore,

- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with;
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school;
- References should not be made 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 affects 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.

Guidance/Protection for Staff:

The following information provides guidance/protection for staff using social networking sites:

- 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;
- This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend;
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher;
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child;
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the Head teacher;

Guidance/protection for Pupils:

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. The following extract is from the 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."

There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the 'Help' screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is:

http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage

Further guidance/protection:

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day;
- All mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day via the phone collection system, with the Internet capability must be switched off. Year 5/6 pupils have permission to bring phones onto the campus to be used before and after the school day.

- 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 Head teacher. 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;
- Incidents of improper contact or cyber bullying must be reported to class teachers, in confidence, as soon as it happens;
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

Child Protection Guidance:

If the Head teacher or Dunkirk Safeguarding Team 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;
- Schools must refer the matter to the LA who will investigate the matter;
- 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 LA 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

Cyber Bullying:

By adopting the recommended 'no use of social networking sites on school premises', Dunkirk Primary School, Dunkirk breakfast club and Fun Club protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the policy of access to social networking sites.

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

This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

- A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and text from an ex pupil who moved 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 all at weekends using MSN and Facebook. The pupils are in the school. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is the tricky one. 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 Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the schools recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.

- Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy.
- If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment.
- This guidance can also apply to our mobile phone policy.

Reviewed: December 2017

Signed: Heidi Hollis Head Teacher

Next review: December 2018