



LANGSTONE PRIMARY ACADEMY

Social Media Policy

RATIONALE

Social media (such as Facebook and Twitter; sending snapchats and WhatsApp messages on mobile phones; blogs; online discussion forums) bring opportunities for children, young people and adults to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new and exciting ways. It is important that people are able to use these appropriately and safely. No child at Langstone Junior can access any social media at school. We sincerely hope that no child can access Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok outside of school, as under 13s should not be registered users. The same should be true for children under 16 accessing Whatsapp.

AIMS

This policy aims to:

- balance support for innovation whilst providing a framework for best practice
- ensure the school is not exposed to legal risks
- ensure that the school's excellent reputation is not compromised
- ensure that users of social media are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy is for all school stakeholders who may have access to social media - employees, governors etc.. and children who attend the school.

PRINCIPLES

All potential users should bear in mind that information they share through any social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, as well as the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Social networking applications must not be used by employees for personal use, in work time, unless they have the express permission of the Headteacher.

Any proposal for using social networking applications as part of a school service/activity (whether they are hosted by the school or by a 3rd party) must be approved by the Headteacher first.

School users must adhere to the following **Terms of Use** Social networking applications:

1. 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
2. must not be used for the promotion of financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
3. must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
4. must not be used for actions that would put the employees, parents, Governors or children in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff

5. must not breach the school's disciplinary policy, equality policy or bullying policy
6. must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school issues, staff, children or parents
7. no employee should have a 'friend' who is a minor
8. employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
9. references should not be made to any staff member, child, parent or school activity or event unless prior permission has been obtained from the Headteacher
10. 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
11. no child should attempt to access a staff member's area on a network
12. staff are not permitted to have a mobile phone switched on around children during the school day
13. as a rule children should not bring mobiles phones to school but on the rare occasion that it does they should hand their mobile phone to their class teacher at the beginning of the school day.

MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

Any violation of this policy will be considered as potentially gross misconduct under the school's Disciplinary Policy (staff); under the Code of Conduct (governors) and under the school's Behaviour and Exclusion Policies (children). All staff, children, parents, and Governors are encouraged to report any suspicions of misuse to the Headteacher or trusted adult. If the Headteacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using social networking in an inappropriate way as detailed above, this should be recorded in line with the Child Protection Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy. Children are strongly encouraged to report to a trusted adult any worries they have about cyberbullying or improper contact. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with children and families where there are reports of cyberbullying/misuse of social media during out of school hours.

THE LAW

Whilst there is no one specific offence of cyberbullying, certain activities can be criminal offences under a range of different laws, including: The Protection from Harassment act 1997, The Malicious Communications act 1988, S.127 of the Communication act 2003, Public Order Act 1986, The Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996

A school cannot be 'defamed'; only individuals or groups of individuals can bring action for defamation. Staff who are concerned that comments posted about them are defamatory in nature, should seek advice from their union or undertake their own legal advice.

LINKS TO OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

Complaints procedure, Acceptable Use, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Safeguarding & Staff Disciplinary, Staff Acceptable Use, Staff Code of Conduct, E-Safety.

Date Reviewed: December 2024
Next Review Date: December 2026