



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Signed	<i>V. Garrett</i>
Role	Chair of Governors
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Approved by (Committee)	Full Governing Body
Date approved	16 th February 2017
Review frequency	Three years
Date of next review	Spring 2020

1. Introduction:

1.1: This social media policy is designed to give advice and guidance to practitioners on the safe use of social media, both personally and professionally. In particular, to support practitioners' work with children, young people, their families and carers.

1.2: Social media is a factor in modern day life and should be embraced rather than ignored. Everyone in the children's workforce is an individual with a private life; however, off duty matters may have a bearing on their professional life. Therefore, sound judgement and due care should be exercised as conduct which may not directly relate to service users may be relevant to an employee's suitability to work with children.

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate in new and creative ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and their services effectively and flexibly. It is also important that we balance these with our duties to our organisations, the community and the Isle of Wight, our legal responsibilities and our professional reputation.

2. Scope:

2.1: This policy is recommended for all practitioners who work at Northwood Primary School Academy Trust as they are deemed to be members of the Isle of Wight Children's Workforce.

2.2: This policy acts as guidance to managers who are supervising frontline practitioners working with children and young people on the Isle of Wight.

2.3: The term social media refers to any internet based medium for communicating with other individuals or organisations and includes but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn
- Blogs
- File sharing networks such as YouTube, Flickr, Instagram and WhatsApp.
- Conversation on message boards
- Product and service reviews e.g. Trip Advisor
- Taking part in webinars
- Podcasts made available to download on the internet.
- Interactive websites for personal and professional use sometimes known as 'public platforms'.

2.4: It is understood that as technology evolves so will the use of social media so this policy gives broad guidance on it generally rather than specific instruction on the use of any platforms. It is also noted that it could date very quickly if technology moves faster than this policy is reviewed.

2.5: This policy will look at social media for personal use, professional use, and organisational use and as a tool for assessment. It should also be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

3. Personal Use:

3.1: Many practitioners will have personal social media accounts which are perfectly acceptable. Social media is a factor in modern day life.

3.2: Practitioners should ensure that their online presence is professionally appropriate and does not compromise their reputation by those that get to see what they post.

3.3: Practitioners should remember that any post on a social media account leaves a digital footprint, even if it is later deleted. To this extent they should think carefully about anything they post, remembering that they are a member of the Isle of Wight's children's workforce and anything they post on social media has the potential to end up in the public arena.

3.4: Practitioners should ensure they have the correct privacy or security settings on their social media accounts to prevent them being viewed by individuals they may not wish to have access to their personal information.

3.5: It is worth noting that having set these privacy settings they should be checked regularly as updates, upgrades or changes in the way they are accessed could reset the privacy settings.

3.6: No practitioner should ever break the law on social media for example post racist comments or use it to share illegal images.

3.7: Practitioners should never be 'friends' or 'linked' on social media with children and young people that attend our school.

3.8: Practitioners should use their common sense when being 'friends' or linked to parents and families of children at our school.

3.9: Social media should not be used for practitioners to discuss work based issues, either organisational or related to individuals, as this would put these in the public arena.

3.10: If a post on social media is 'liked' this could be seen as agreement with all the content related to that post to date.

3.11: Personal use of social media should be undertaken on any kind of equipment provided by the Academy Trust.

3.12: If personal computers and devices are used to access social media, individuals are responsible for ensuring that these devices are not accessed by someone else afterwards who is then able to retrieve the information. If there is uncertainty it is important to seek professional IT advice.

3.13: Personal use of social media should only be undertaken on personally owned equipment/devices. Using public devices such as Internet Cafes runs the risk of others accessing personal details from this machine afterwards.

4. Professional Use:

4.1: Practitioners can use social media as a positive platform for sharing ideas, knowledge and promoting their profession. In doing so they are acting as ambassadors for their profession and the children's workforce of the Isle of Wight as a whole.

4.2: Personal information of children and young people that we work with should never be shared on social media/public platforms.

4.3: Likewise privileged or confidential information about colleagues should never be shared on social media/public platforms.

4.4: It is important that the children we work with learn to use social media/public platforms safely and it is everyone's responsibility to try and keep young people safe whilst they are on line. Young people should be supported to use social media safely with awareness of its potential and risks.

4.5: Practitioners may make use of social media/public platforms for continuing professional development for example by accessing learning material. It is important that we keep our practice up to date but also be aware that such material may not be factually correct, so should validate its source before assuming its credibility.

4.6: If professional social media accounts for work that are open source material they should differentiate these from their personal account where they may connect to friends and family members.

5. Organisational Use:

5.1: Photographs of children should not be published without the expressed written consent of the person who holds parental responsibility.

5.2: No form of bullying or abuse will be tolerated on any social media account.

5.3: Some social media/public accounts allow people to write comments about the information which is posted. Organisations should reserve the right to and take steps to delete comments that are abusive or insulting or break the terms of the policy.

5.4: Any practitioner who persists in posting comments that are abusive or insulting should be reported to the HR department as they have breached the organisations code of conduct.

5.5: Practitioners should be aware that if they use their personal account to link to an organisational page this may allow other user of the organisational page to view their personal information.

6. As an Assessment Tool:

6.1: Social media accounts are a good way of having a better understanding of an individual's life and there may be justification for accessing someone's personal social media accounts if they are open source material.

6.2: Social media accounts give an opportunity to see beyond what and how individuals present to professionals during assessment visits.

6.3: It could be considered proportional to view an individual's social media account to seek evidence to confirm or refute something that may be a concern (child safeguarding). This decision should be made on a case by case basis with a recorded view of why this is being done, by whom and should always consider who is best placed to do it.

6.4: If an organisation does view a service user's social media account and there is relevant information to a child protection concern on there, we may consider taking a screenshot of this and this should be recorded in CP files.

6.5: No individual's social media account should ever be hacked.

7. Endorsements:

7.1: This policy is supported by the LADO for the Isle of Wight area and the LADO may consider it when looking at any referral where the use of social media is a contributory factor.