

THE GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Social Networking Policy 2.0

Status:		
Date Adopted by Governing body:	January 2021	
Review Date:	May 2025	Bi-Annually
Created by:		
Rebecca Denmeade	March 2020	
Reviewed:	July 2023	

Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. Some of the most widely used are Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, SnapChat and Twitter.

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring 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, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation. As a school, we are also using social media as a platform to promote the school's presence within the wider community and therefore need to consider how we can do this safely and effectively.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- the school is not exposed to legal risks
- the reputation of the school is not negatively affected by the use of social media
- that our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Online Safety Policy, Code of Conduct for Staff, Governors and Volunteers and all attached Acceptable Use Agreements to ensure all school stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities when working online.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY:

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, parents, volunteers, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school stakeholders'.

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 the school stakeholders are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook and Instagram
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter

All school stakeholders 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 Code of Conduct and take into account if they are negatively representing the school.

1. Social Networking use related to the school

1.1 Use of Social Networking sites during work hours

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher due to special circumstances (see **Mobile Phone Policy** for further information and examples).

Staff who are operating social networking sites for the school will not do so during school hours unless completely necessary i.e. an emergency message for parents related to a school closure or on site incident. If they do need to operate social networking sites during working hours, they will do so outside of their contact time with children, in a "staff only area" and will ensure their own personal devices are not used to do so.

1.2 Use of Social Networking on behalf of the school

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 or a member of the SLT first.

Any social networking sites linked to the school (currently Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube) will be operated by designated people who will sign agreements to ensure their understanding of how to do this in a safe and responsible way. At least two members of school staff will have access to each social networking platform to ensure that content received is appropriate and to safeguard each other against any accusations of improper use.

Outside of school hours, these designated members of staff may use their own devices to update content on these social networking platforms due to a lack of school owned devices being available to use. This usage will be done in compliance with these "Terms of Use" which each of the designated staff members will have read and signed within agreements:

- No content of a personal nature is to be saved onto your own device (this includes photographs, messages, contact details and other items deemed as "personal"). If for any reason you do need to save a photograph, for the purpose of uploading it, it must then be immediately deleted from all areas of your device.
- Your device must be available, at request, for SLT to inspect to ensure there is no personal content, linked to the school's networking sites, being saved on it.
- When posting on the school's social networking sites, you must ensure you are not sharing any personal view or opinions and only representing the school in an appropriate and positive way at all times.
- Any comments, messages or replies sent to parents must always come from the school's social networking site and not your own.
- Any new initiatives/ ideas that you would like to operate using the school's social networking sites must be approved by the Head Teacher to ensure they are appropriate and in line with the school's policies/ vision.

See APPENDIX A- **Management of Social Media Agreement**

1.3 General Terms of Use for all stakeholders

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher. However, school stakeholders must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

School stakeholders must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school stakeholders. 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 the school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches must be considered in conjunction with the school's Code of Conduct. The Grove Primary School expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right to freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Terms of Use

Social Networking applications:

- 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.
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Must not breach the school's policies linked to misconduct, bullying or harassment.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with
- No staff member should have a current parent of the school as a 'friend' to share information with
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed by a member of SLT

- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for The Grove or detrimentally affects the school's reputation then the school 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.

2. Guidance for school stakeholders

2.1 Guidance and Protection for Staff when using social networking sites

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on personal social networking sites
- No member of staff should interact with any current parent of the school on personal social networking sites.
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on personal 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 have pupils/ relations within the school community and there are legitimate family links, please inform the Head Teacher in writing.
- 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 named Designated Safeguarding Lead.

2.2 Guidance and Protection for Pupils when using social networking sites

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school day
- All pupil mobile phones must be handed into the office/ class teacher at the beginning of the school day to ensure they are not being used as an alternative means of internet access. Parents must sign a form, giving permission for their child to have a phone at school and agreeing to these terms, prior to their child bringing in a device. **See APPENDIX B- Mobile Phone Parental Permission Form**
- 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
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

3. Dealing with issues related to social networking sites/ use

3.1 Child Protection Guidance

If the Head Teacher 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
- Refer the matter to the LADO (if necessary) who will investigate via Wiltshire County Council Police Child Protection Team.
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to reassure the parent and explain processes
- If the disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- The LADO 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 the disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out

- Record the incident as an Online Safety incident to ensure it is considered when online safety policies and procedures are reviewed, to make the school's online safeguarding as effective as possible.

3.2 Cyberbullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, The Grove Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's 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. The Grove will support children and parents in any way that they can, with any reported incidents of cyberbullying, and ask parents to use the Online Safety Reporting Form and other relevant key information on the school's website to support them.

[Click here to access the Online Safety Page of The Grove's Website](#)

3.3. Reporting an incident related to the use of social networking sites

Incidents reported within school time will be recorded on an Online Safety Report Form and given to the Online Safety Lead or another member of SLT. If staff are reporting an issue, they will have access to this form on the school system or in paper form if needed. If parents are reporting an issue they can acquire a copy of this form from the School Office, their child's class teacher or through the school's website (see hyperlink in above statement).

During periods of home learning, holidays and weekends, parents will have access to an Online Safety Reporting Form, via the school website, that they can complete to seek support from the school when dealing with the incident; this can be completed online and emailed into the school via the admin or child protection email accounts, dependent on level of urgency:

admin@grove.wilts.sch.uk

childprotection@grove.wilts.sch.uk

All completed forms will be received by the Online Safety Lead and discussed amongst SLT. The parent who has reported the issue, as well as any other parents that are involved in the incident, will be contacted and actions will be discussed/ explained to deal with the incident.

If necessary, the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will also seek support from the MASH Team, in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies.

APPENDIX A

Staff Social Media Management Agreement



Name of staff member:		
School Social Media pages that they have administrative access to:	Facebook	
	Instagram	
	Twitter	
	YouTube	

Terms of Use Statements	Signed	Dated
No content of a personal nature <u>will be saved</u> onto your own device (this includes photographs, messages, contact details and other items deemed as "personal"). <i>If for any reason you do need to save a photograph, for the purpose of uploading it, it must then be immediately deleted from all areas of your device including the deleted folder.</i>		
Your device must be available, at request, for SLT to inspect to ensure there is no personal content, linked to the school's networking sites, <u>being saved</u> on it.		
When posting on the school's social networking sites, you must ensure you are not sharing any personal view or opinions and only representing the school in an appropriate and positive way at all times. <i>Please check the content of any posts that you may be unsure of, with a member of SLT, prior to posting.</i>		
Any comments, messages or replies sent to parents must always come from the school's social networking site/ feed and not your own.		
Any new initiatives/ ideas that you would like to operate using the school's social networking sites must be approved by the Head Teacher to ensure they are appropriate and in line with the school's policies/ ethos.		