



South Gosforth First School
'Roots to grow and wings to fly'

South Gosforth First School Social Media Policy

	Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read it• Chance for feedback	FGB/Sub committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approved	Accessible <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website link saved
Review Date:	October 2024	October 2024	October 2024
Next Review Due:	October 2025		
Changes: Section 5, Point 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We strongly discourage staff from being friends with current parents or other members of the wider school community, though we do recognise that there may be circumstances where this would be acceptable (eg parents of children who work in school). This information should be shared with the Head Teacher and made transparent where possible.			

1.0 Policy

The Governing Body recognises that employees have the right to access social networking sites for personal communications. This policy applies to all staff in school and gives guidance and advice on how they should conduct themselves and control and monitor information stored on such sites.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites have become a very significant part of life for many people. They provide a positive way to keep in touch with friends and colleagues, and can be used to exchange ideas and thoughts on common interests. Examples of such sites include, but are not limited to, blogs (short for web log), X, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Windows Live Spaces, MSN, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chat rooms and instant messenger', this list however is by no means exhaustive.

Staff are expected to keep a professional distance from pupils and there should be a clear separation of the private social lives of staff and that of pupils. There is no need for social

networking to go on between staff and pupils and there is no clear educational benefit. Staff should also ensure that their relationships and interactions with colleagues when using social networking sites remains appropriate and professional.

It is important that staff are able to use technologies and services effectively and flexibly whilst ensuring that they do not make themselves vulnerable. However, it is also important to ensure that this is balanced with the Governing Body's duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

2.0 Scope and Purpose

Social networking sites allow users to build online profiles, share information, music and photographs, however users are reminded that information uploaded onto such sites, may be viewed by others even if it appears to be "private" or is stored within a closed profile or group. Information that you do not wish others to view should not be uploaded in such a public domain and staff should ensure that their security settings are maintained at an appropriate level.

3.0 Who does this policy apply to?

This policy will apply to all staff in schools including volunteers and supply agency personnel.

4.0 Aims

The policy aims to:

- Enable employees to use social networking sites safely and securely;
- Ensure that employees are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites;
- Safeguard employees in connection with the use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable;
- Ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

5.0 Use of Social Networking Sites

For employees' own security all communication via social networking sites should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore advised that staff follow the following procedures:

- Staff must adhere to the schools own IT usage policy in relation to accessing social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment;
- Staff must not accept pupils as friends – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff vulnerable to allegations;
- Staff must not to be friends with recent pupils, even after they have left the school. The potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking;
- We strongly discourage staff from being friends with current parents or other members of the wider school community, though we do recognise that there may be circumstances where this would be acceptable (eg parents of children who work in school). This information should be shared with the Head Teacher and made transparent where possible.
- Staff should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space;
- Staff should not post indecent remarks;
- If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil, or becomes exposed to any information that relates to the School or another member of staff, they must report it to their Line Manager/Headteacher and contact the internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action;
- Staff should not write about their place of work/ colleagues and pupils on social media as if they do so they will be in breach of this policy.
- Staff must not disclose information or work such as lesson plans, presentations, project work etc which could be considered to be the intellectual property of the school
- Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act;
- Staff must not disclose any information about the school/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena;
- In no circumstances should staff post photographs of pupils;
- Staff should not make defamatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute;

- Staff should not disclose confidential information relating to his/her employment at the school or indicate any political allegiances
- Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive, derogatory or inappropriate to others.
- Staff should not post information or comments, or engage in any discussions that could be interpreted as bullying, harassment or discrimination of any description.
- Staff should not join any online groups that could be considered to condone or promote inappropriate behaviours or post inappropriate content.

6.0 Breaches of this Policy

The Governing Body does not discourage staff from using social networking sites and appreciates that there may be occasions where such sites can be used as an effective business tool. However, all staff should be aware that the Governing Body will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. Staff found to be in breach of this policy will be managed under the School's disciplinary procedure.

Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Headteacher can exercise their right to monitor the use of the school's information systems and internet access where they believe unauthorised use may be taking place; to ensure compliance with regulatory practices; to ensure standards of service are maintained; to prevent or detect crime; to protect the communication system and to pick up messages when someone is away from school. If any such monitoring detects the unauthorised use of social networking sites disciplinary action will be taken.

7.0 Monitoring the procedure

Feedback is encouraged from governing bodies and head teachers on the effectiveness of this policy and procedure. It will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is appropriate in light of recommended best practice and complies with statutory regulations. In the event of any conflict with statutory regulations, the legal provisions will have precedence over this procedure in all cases.

Governing bodies should monitor the application of this policy and procedure, particularly to ensure that their practices comply with it and are not discriminatory.