



SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL

Policy author	Chief Executive
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“Our schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at all times and expects everybody working within the Academy Trust to share this commitment”

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many youngsters. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This document gives clarity to the way in which social media are to be used by pupils and school staff at The Henry Box School, Queen Emma’s Primary School and Finstock Church of England Primary School.

There are five key areas:

- 1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.**
- 2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.**
- 3. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.**
- 4. Comments posted by parents/carers.**
- 5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.**

1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.

If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- i. Staff must never add pupils as friends into their personal accounts.
- ii. Staff must not post pictures of school events without the Headteacher's consent.
- iii. Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times.
- iv. Staff need to use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teachers’ Standards.
- v. Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- vi. Staff must not post negative comments about the school, pupils, parents/carers or colleagues, including Local Committee Volunteers and Trustees.
- vii. Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
- viii. Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

3. Creation of network accounts by staff or anyone associated with the school (i.e. PTFA) for use in education.

All social media services must be approved by the Headteacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

4. Comments posted by parents/carers.

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion.

- i. Parents/carers are not expected to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.
- ii. Parents/carers should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- iii. Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.
- iv. Parents/carers must not create social media accounts which appear to be associated with the school, i.e. class group pages on Facebook.

5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.

The school's Anti Bullying Policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear.

Schools may take action against incidents that happen outside school if they:

- i. Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, or
- ii. Pose a threat to another pupil or member of the public, or
- iii. Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate would be covered by this irrespective of when/where the post was made.