

Coulsdon Cluster of Schools

Social Media Statement

For the purpose of this statement, social media refers to websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

We recognise that use of social media and social networking play an important role in the lives of many people; networking by all our stakeholders brings risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped.

Social media pertains to publishing information and marketing and information

This objectives of this statement are to:

1. Give clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at XXXXXXXX School.
2. Encourage the responsible, positive and constructive official use of Social Media in support of the school's mission, values, objectives, plans and reputation.
3. Prevent and avoid damage to the reputation of the school caused by irresponsible, or unauthorised use of Social Media.
4. Protect the pupils, staff, governors and parents of the school from being recipients of unwanted personal comments or connections on social media

There are five key areas:

- A. The approved use of social media on behalf of the school
- B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity
- C. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
- D. Comments posted by parents/carers
- E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

A. The approved use of social media on behalf of the school

The use of social media as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Use of social media applications which are not related to any school service does not need to be approved by the Headteacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. 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 school network or not. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct.

XXXXX School expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Terms of Use for Social Networking Applications:

- Must not be used to publish any content which could 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 for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
- 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 misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies
- 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
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Headteacher
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer 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.

B. 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 for staff:

- Staff must never add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 18).
- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body or Academy Trust.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within pupil contact times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

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

Users need to be 16 to use WhatsApp. Nearly all other social media services require users to be at least 13 years of age to access and use their services. This includes Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok and Skype.

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day

- All pupil mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day, the phone must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using a mobile phone
- 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 Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day unless for direct school use and under the supervision of a staff member
- Any attempts to access unapproved sites 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. We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

D. Comments posted by parents/carers

Methods of school communication may include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters, Facebook, twitter and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion.

Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event. Posting of pictures without parental permission may result in a ban of all parents on videoing or photographing school events.

Parents should raise concerns or make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Parents should not post malicious, fictitious, accusatory or defamatory comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Parents have a responsibility to monitor their child's use of social media and protect them from inappropriate content they may come across. Guidance in setting parental controls and monitoring us can be found on www.childnet.com.

E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

Where a disclosure of cyber bullying by a child registered in the school is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school. Parents will be informed of disclosures made and the school will follow its Anti Bullying Policy processes and sanctions.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Headteacher will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

The school recognises that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt

- cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession.” (National Association of Headteachers)

N.B: This statement is supported by the school's Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.