



ST. PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Social Networking Policy

“United through Jesus in Faith, Love and Learning”

St. Paul's whole school community (all staff, governors, parents and volunteers working in the school) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children.

Date of adoption: The Governing Body of St. Paul's Catholic Primary School adopted this policy on **7th December 2015**

Date of review: This policy is will be reviewed *Autumn Term 2017*.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to schools on the appropriate use of social networking by school staff.
- 1.2. The governing body may wish to approve additional guidance after consultation with staff and relevant professional associations to meet the operational needs of the school.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this advice note is to guide the judgements of management and staff using social networking sites and the information that they provide through these by:

Advising management and staff to ensure that children are safeguarded

Advising management and staff to ensure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected through use of social networking sites.

Ensuring that the school is not subject to legal challenge as a result of school employees using and providing information on social networking sites e.g. data protection, discrimination and other sensitive information.

2.2 School managers should make all staff aware of this advice note and the expectations of staff conduct related to social networking. For new staff this should form part of their induction.

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Approved in: December 2015

Next Review Date: Autumn Term 2017

3. Social Networking Sites / Applications

3.1 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, MSN, You Tube.

4. Staff Conduct

- 4.1 St Paul's Code of Conduct for schools (paragraph 4.1) states *"In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, Governors, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff."* This principle applies to the use of social networking sites.
- 4.2 The way in which school staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the school and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents of the school. In their use of social networking sites, staff should be aware that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.
- 4.3 It is recommended that school staff take adequate precautions when using social networking sites/applications, both in vetting material that could be connected to them (through their own profile and information added about them) and through the use of appropriate security settings.
- 4.4 School employees should not be "friends" with pupils on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue.
- 4.5 It is recommended that management and school staff do not identify their school on social networking sites as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the school.
- 4.6 It is recommended that the school identifies a member of their senior leadership team from whom staff can seek advice on their personal use of social networking sites and/or report concerns about the inappropriate use of a social networking site/application by another member of staff.
- 4.7 Where schools use email and learning platforms to communicate with pupils, e.g. about homework, the Headteacher should set out local guidance around the use of these applications for both pupils and staff.

- 4.8 Where pupils behave inappropriately with staff this should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team and dealt with through the school's pupil disciplinary process.

The St Paul's Disciplinary Policy states that the follow are examples of gross misconduct:

- 4.8.1 Paragraph 6.4.3) *Conduct that is a gross misconduct – e.g. entering into a personal relationship with a pupil.*
- 4.8.2 (Paragraph 6.4.3) *Criminal offences and other conduct outside employment could cause an employee's position at the school to become untenable particularly in circumstances where the conduct or offence is unacceptable to colleagues, management or parents or where the conduct or offence has the potential to affect the reputation of the school. Making defamatory statements in the course of employment (e.g. making statements that are or could be slanderous or libellous) whether orally, written, or in electronic communication.*

Breach of these disciplinary rules in the section above (4.8) in relation to social networking or any inappropriate use of social networking sites and applications by staff will be dealt with through the School's Disciplinary Procedure.