



## Farnborough Road Infant School

### Social Networking Policy

“Learning, Caring and Achieving Together”

The school is aware and acknowledges that adults and children are using social networking sites. Currently the most frequently used are; Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook, Tik-Tok and X, this list is not exhaustive and school recognises that this is a constantly changing canvas. As these apps are growing we will endeavour to keep ourselves up to date with current trends and teach the children about the potential e-safety aspects of using social media platforms.

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.

This policy and associated guidance are to

- protect staff
- advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites.
- ensure the school is not exposed to legal risks
- ensure the reputation of the school is not adversely affected

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs for example Blogger
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook and Instagram
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube, Be Real and TikTok
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, for example X
- Communication and messenger services such as Snap Chat and WhatsApp

**All school representatives 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 Equality and Diversity Policy.**

#### **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.

Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, or the school’s reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.

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 Head Teacher

Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Privacy settings must be set at the highest level.

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.

### **Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking**

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted.

No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites.

No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18 years. 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 and friends have pupils in school 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 in school.

Staff should ask permission of other members of staff before adding photographs to social networking sites which include their images.

### **Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.
- The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

### **Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking**

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

"If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us"

"We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk to their children about safe internet use can be found on this help page"

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

- No pupil must have a mobile phone in school.
- 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 IT equipment other than with close supervision
- Any improper contact or cyber bullying should be reported to a grown up at home or the child's class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens. We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying

### **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 the Whole School Safeguarding Policy
- The Headteacher or Designated Person should refer the matter to the LADO
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes
- If 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 disclosure is from a child, the normal process in our Whole School Safeguarding policy is followed until the police investigation has been carried out.

### **Cyber Bullying**

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Farnborough Road Infant 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.

This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

#### **A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and text from an ex pupil who moved three months ago:**

This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.

**A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y2:** The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the school's recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.

Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This will be dealt with under the school's Anti-Bullying policy. If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

The policy will be reviewed regularly.

**Updated November 2025**

<b>Signed</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>
<b>Signed</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Chair of Governors</b>