



Social Media Policy

Approved by Governors: 27.3.2018

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Review date: March 2021

CAUSEWAY GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Introduction

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This gives clarity to the way in which social media / mobile phones are to be used by all stakeholders: pupils, governors, visitors, parents and school staff at Causeway Green Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

Blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, 'microblogging applications, virtual worlds. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, MSN, YouTube and **Google Classroom**.

All stakeholders 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 with the school and Local authority Equality and Safeguarding Policies.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

Causeway Green Primary school, its leaders and governors are not exposed to legal risks;

the reputation of Causeway Green Primary school, staff and governors at the school are not adversely affected;

all children are safeguarded;

any users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of Causeway Green Primary school.

3. Scope

There are five key areas:

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**
- B. The use of social networking sites by pupils outside of school (Google Classroom)**
- C. Use of social networking by staff, governors, volunteers and/or elected members in a personal capacity and for educational purposes (Google Classroom)**
- D. Comments posted by parents/carers**

E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

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

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used / accessed in school.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two. All pupil mobile phones (Y5/6 only) must be handed to a member of staff for safekeeping during the working day.

Any improper use of mobile phones or cyber bullying must be reported to the class teacher immediately. 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 or texts. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekend using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is the tricky one. 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 the use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators 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 should be dealt with under the school's anti-bullying policy and/or behaviour 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 cyber bullying.

B. The use of social networking sites by pupils outside of school (Google Classroom)

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT for educational purposes and these rules apply to online learning using Google Classroom.

C. 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 ensure that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16)
- Staff are **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
- Staff **must not** use social networking sites during contact time with pupils
- Never give out personal details of any kind which may identify them
- 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 highest 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.
- Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply
- Know and follow our school's Employee Code of Conduct and only used in a private office or the staff room
- Mobile phones must be stored out of the sight of pupils at all times
- When using Google Classroom at home, staff will ensure they are not visible on camera and they will follow the acceptable use policy.

D. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking when choosing Causeway Green Primary School for their child. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters 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.

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

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

E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter. It is presumed that parents agree to follow the school's policies when they choose to send their child to our school.

The Governing Body understands that "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where posting 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)

Related documentation:

- Acceptable Use Policy and Agreements
- Complaints Procedure
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Risk assessment for live streaming