

The use of Social Networking Sites Guidance

PACT

Wibsey Primary School
Guidance for School Staff

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City of Bradford MDC

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1. Introduction

Wibsey Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social networking sites such as blogs, MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, You Tube, Windows Live Spaces, MSN, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chatrooms and instant messenger. Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list for illustrative purposes only and it should not be assumed that if it does not appear on this list the policy does not apply.

Staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries with pupils and there should be a clear separation of the private social lives of staff and that of pupils. Staff are advised that it is inappropriate to have on-line relationships with pupils (except where appropriate within family relationships) or to allow pupils access to their own pages. Similarly accessing pupils' pages is discouraged as this may cross the professional boundary that should be maintained between staff and pupils.

Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to all school staff employed by the Local Authority, including Community and VA Schools. It will also apply to staff that are employed through agencies, casual workers, volunteers and governors.

Aims of the policy

- Ensure that employees and others listed above are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites and understand the importance of using them safely and securely
- Safeguard employees and others listed in the section above to ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable through their use of social networking sites
- Ensure that school maintains its duty to safeguard children, staff, the reputation of the school, the wider community and the Local Authority.

Relevant Legislation

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, updated by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)

Responsibilities

The Governing Body of Wibsey Primary School shall ensure that all employees and those listed above are made aware of this policy and shall ensure that the policy is implemented and procedures are in place to deal with non-compliance

Headteacher/Line Managers shall:

- Ensure that all staff, casual workers, volunteers and governors have received the relevant training and guidance in relation to the use of Social Networking
- Seek advice from Human Resources on the approach to be adopted when potential issues arise
- Investigate any allegations made in relation to the mis-use of Social Networking
- Instigate disciplinary or other relevant procedures where appropriate to do so

Staff and those listed above will behave professionally and responsibly at all times and will comply with the policy.

2. Use of Social Networking Sites, employees, casual workers, volunteers and governors:

- should not befriend pupils online as personal communication could be considered inappropriate and may potentially make them vulnerable to allegations.
- should not place inappropriate photographs on any social network space.
- should not post indecent remarks.
- If a message is received on their social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil they should report it to their Line Manager/Headteacher so that this can be investigated and the appropriate action taken.
- must not disclose any confidential information or personal data about any individual/pupil/colleague which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- should not post photographs or comments about pupils, other colleagues, parents/guardians on social networking sites.
- Should not make defamatory remarks about the school/ colleagues/ pupils/ parents/guardians or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring school or the Local Authority into disrepute.
- should be aware of the potential for on-line fraud and should be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.
- should not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment.
- Staff should set their Social Network (facebook) settings to the maximum. For guidance on how to do this please see Using Facebook safely a guide for professionals working with young people.

3. Breaches of the Policy

In instances where it is alleged that an issue has arisen in connection with the use of social media 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 or other appropriate procedure.
- The Governing Body will then 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. Certain breaches may lead to your contract of employment or other agreed terms of engagement being subject to summary termination.
- Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the School can exercise the right to monitor the use of the school's information systems and internet access where it is believed that unauthorised use may be taking place, to ensure compliance with regulatory practices, to ensure standards of service are maintained, to prevent or detect crime, to protect the communications system and to pick up messages if someone is away from school. If such monitoring detects the unauthorised use of social networking sites disciplinary action may be taken where appropriate.
- In certain circumstances the school or Local Authority will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour where there are concerns as to its legality.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and sooner if necessary due to changing technology.