



Policy Document for: Social Media

Approved by Directors: June 2018

Due for Review: May 2023

## Social Media

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many young people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. We believe that children should not have Social Media Accounts at Primary School age without parental consent. We do appreciate that parents will have Social Media accounts and we try and cater for this area of communication respectfully.

### **For information:**

Twitter doesn't ask your age upon sign up (this was removed in 2009) and originally stipulated the age of 13. Facebook minimum age requirement is 13 years old. It's the same age on Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Reddit, Snapchat, Musical.ly and Secret, too.

The minimum age on LinkedIn is 14. WhatsApp it's 16, and on Vine it's 17. Some platforms, such as YouTube, WeChat and Kik, have a minimum age required of 18, although children aged 13-17 can sign up with parental permission.

This document gives clarity to the way in which social media are to be used by pupils and school staff within the Manor Multi Academy Trust

**There are five key areas:**

1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.
3. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.
4. Comments posted by parents/carers.
5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.

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

The school's Acceptable Internet Use Policy makes it clear to pupils what acceptable/unacceptable online behaviour is and what use of social media is allowed. Children will be shown this document at the start of each school year. Any home / personal based activity is not the responsibility of the School and will not be discussed as this type of activity is not permitted until the age of 13.

Children will regularly be made aware of the risks involved with social media, how they need to protect themselves online, and when social media is used outside of school, what is acceptable/unacceptable online behaviour. Age appropriate posters will be displayed in classrooms and around the school, and children regularly reminded in assemblies and through the computing curriculum about the risks involved with online safety. Parents and carers will also be informed about online risks which are posed to children using networking sites at home and advice given to them in the form of newsletters/workshops on how they can protect their children online at home.

If social media sites are used for curriculum learning purposes (ie. Blogging and the creation of Wiki pages) then staff should carry out their own risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate, and make sure children are fully aware of acceptable/unacceptable online behaviour.

**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 are issued to staff:**

Staff must never add pupils or ex-pupils under 18 as friends into their personal accounts.

Staff must not post pictures of school events without the Headteacher's consent.

Staff must not use social networking sites within working hours.

Staff need to 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 must not post negative comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including Governors.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Head of School in the first instance

## Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.

All social media services must be approved by the Executive Head in advance of any educational work being undertaken. Account details are to be kept discreet and secure from others except for those responsible for updating School Social Media. Devices used for this activity must be kept secure, password or Pin code protected and not shared with others.

## Use of social networking by parents/carers.

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion.

Parents are not expected to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.

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.

Annual workshops will be held for parents to update them on the use of social media both in school and at home by children/parents and staff.

## Dealing with incidents of online bullying

The schools e-safety and/or Anti Bullying Policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear. The school can take action against incidents that happen outside school if it:

1. Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
2. Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
3. Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate would be covered by this irrespective of when/where the post was made. Further details of helping with any form of e-Safety can be found in the e-Safety Policy located on the website.

Based on the seriousness of any activity the Academy Trust will not hesitate to contact and involve the relevant authorities (Police) to assist with the resolution.