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Pupil Support Governing Body Meeting

Spring 2017

**Social Media Policy**

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**Summary**

At Fieldhead Carr Primary School we are keen to promote good home-school links and encourage interaction and communication amongst the wider school family. This, we feel, is an important way to enhance and share our students' school experiences.

This policy will;

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents;
- Set out the procedures the school will follow where it is considered that parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the school, staff, pupils or anyone else associated with the school;
- Set out the action the school will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

It sets out the procedures that will be taken following inappropriate use of social media

**Recommendation**

Governors are requested to read this policy, consider its content and approve its adoption. This policy should be reviewed annually.

<b>AUTHOR</b>	
Name	Lisa Warner
Job title	Computing Lead
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### Overview

At Fieldhead Carr Primary School we are keen to promote good home-school links and encourage interaction and communication amongst the wider school family. This, we feel, is an important way to enhance and share our students' school experiences. This interaction and communication can take place in a variety of ways and through a range of media, such as face-to-face communication (e.g. in the playground), through the school website and weekly newsletter, and through formal events such as parents evenings, stay-and-plays and so on.

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and other similar online forums are now widely used and these types of media allow people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. Unfortunately, such sites can be used inappropriately by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff. This document sets out this school's approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures that will be followed and action that may be taken when it is considered that parents have used such facilities inappropriately. Where there is reference to "parent" in this document this also includes carers and other relatives of a child in school.

### Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents;
- Set out the procedures the school will follow where it is considered that parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the school, staff, pupils or anyone else associated with the school;
- Set out the action the school will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

### Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about the school and provide feedback efficiently and easily. The school recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances.

We would like to encourage parents to share positive stories about the school when they feel able to.

To help with this, as a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the school, staff, pupils or anyone else associated with the school:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would a private and confidential discussion with someone in the school be more appropriate? If there are serious concerns being raised, social media or internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments. Please contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional harm or adversely affect the reputation of the school or a member of the school community?
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the school, any detrimental harm that the school may suffer as a result of the posting and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.
- If there are serious concerns being raised, social media or internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments.
- All parents are invited to join staff in setting a good example for our children by:
- Demonstrating courtesy and respect for staff, other parents and pupils when comments are placed on social networking sites.
- Using appropriate language when discussing school.
- Please contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have.

#### Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the school and those associated with it, it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels such as a private and confidential discussion with Senior Staff, the Head Teacher or using the school's formal complaints process are much better suited to this. The School considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Naming children or posting any comments about children who attend Fieldhead Carr Primary School.
- Making complaints about staff or anyone else connected with the school;
- Making any posts that could be deemed to be cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the school or staff at the school;
- Making defamatory statements about the school or staff at the school;
- Posting negative or offensive comments about staff or any other individual connected to the school;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence;
- Posting on line images of other parents children without their permission.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking and other internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online.

Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media. Please note that most social networking sites require the user to be at least 14 years old.

Procedure the school will follow if inappropriate use continues

The school will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately.

Therefore, as a first step the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try to resolve it and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question.

If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the school considers inappropriate, the school will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the school's concerns to the parent in writing, giving a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene, grossly offensive or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host/provider of the social networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual following appropriate advice.