



Review Due:	July 2022
Last Review	N/A – previously contained in Acceptable Use and Online Safety Policies
Applicable to:	Nunney First School
Reviewed By:	Headteacher
Approved By:	Local Governing Body – 19 th July 2021

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Aims and Objectives

- 1.1.1 Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other and includes for example Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube also have social media elements to them.
- 1.1.2 The school recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers, in particular as a powerful tool which opens up teaching and learning opportunities as well as being an integral part of our lives.
- 1.1.3 Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to:
- assist those defined in paragraph 1.2.1 below working with pupils to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice;
 - set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use;
 - give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
 - support safer working practice;
 - minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils;
 - prevent adults abusing or misusing their position of trust.
- 1.1.4 Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. It is expected that in these circumstances staff in schools will always advise their headteachers of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed. Headteachers will in turn seek advice from the Schools' HR Provider where appropriate.
- 1.1.5 This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to the use of social media in addition to the legal obligations of governing bodies and the relevant legislation listed at Section 3.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to all adults who work in the school. This includes teachers, support staff, supply staff, governors, contractors and volunteers.

1.2.2 It should be followed by any adult whose work brings them into contact with pupils. References to adults should be taken to apply to all the above groups of people in schools. Reference to pupils means all pupils at the school (including those over the age of 18).

1.2.3 This policy should not be used to address issues where other policies and procedures exist to deal with them. For example, any alleged misconduct which falls within the scope of the management of allegations policy requires the school to comply with additional child protection requirements as set out in that policy.

1.3 Status

1.3.1 This document sits alongside the relevant school's safeguarding policies and codes of conduct. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board and The Partnership Trust support the use of Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with pupils in education settings.

1.4 Principles

- Adults who work with pupils are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults in schools should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- Adults in schools should continually monitor and review their practice in terms of the continually evolving world of social media and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

Section 2: Safer Social Media Practice in Schools

2.1 Communication with children (including the use of technology)

2.1.1 In order to make the best use of the many educational and social benefits of new and emerging technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world. Online safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

2.1.2 Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.

2.1.3 Communication with pupils both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries in line with Safer Working Practices.

2.1.4 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not request or respond to any personal information from pupils other than that which may be necessary in

their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.

- 2.1.5 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not give their personal contact details to pupils for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web based identities. If children locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the adult, the adult should not respond and must report the matter to their line manager/the school's Headteacher. The pupil should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.
- 2.1.6 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should, in any communication with pupils, also follow the guidance in section 7 'Standards of Behaviour' of 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings (May 2019 and any updates thereto)'.
- 2.1.7 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should adhere to the school's policies and those of The Partnership Trust, including those with regard to communication with parents and carers and the information they share when using the internet.

2.2 Overview and expectations

- 2.2.1 All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils or students, public in general and all those with whom they work in line with the school and Trust's code of conduct. Adults in contact with pupils should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.
- 2.2.2 The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of adults within the school setting who work with or have contact with pupils. Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.
- 2.2.3 Adults within the school should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident in line with the school's reporting procedures or directly to their line manager/Headteacher.
- 2.2.4 The school also holds an internal Acceptable Use Policy.

2.3 Safer online behaviour

- 2.3.1 Managing personal information effectively makes it far less likely that information will be misused.
- 2.3.2 In their own interests, adults within school settings need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for pupils or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.
- 2.3.3 All adults, particularly those new to the school setting, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may undermine their professional position if they are published outside of the site.
- 2.3.4 Staff and all adults referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 should not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of their work or role within the school.
- 2.3.5 Staff and all adults referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 should not give out their personal details.
- 2.3.6 Staff and all adults referred to in paragraph 1.2.1 should use only equipment and internet services provided by the school or setting in the course of their role within the school.
- 2.3.7 The school's Acceptable Use policy should be followed by all of those to which it applies.
- 2.3.8 Staff and those adults referenced in paragraph 1.2.1 should ensure that their use of technologies could not bring the school or The Partnership Trust into disrepute.
- 2.3.9 Confidentiality needs to be considered at all times. Social media has the potential to discuss inappropriate information and employees need to ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about themselves, their employer, their colleagues, pupils or members of the public. All adults referenced in paragraph 1.2.1 must ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about the School and The Partnership Trust, their employees or pupils.
- 2.3.10 Employees and those adults referenced in paragraph 1.2.1 need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social media (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, pupils or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, or The Partnership Trust could result in formal action being taken against them.
- 2.3.11 Staff and those adults set out in paragraph 1.2.1 are also reminded that they must comply with the requirements of equalities legislation in their on-line communications.

- 2.3.12 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 must never post derogatory remarks or offensive comments on-line or engage in on-line activities which may bring the school or The Partnership Trust into disrepute or could reflect negatively on their professionalism.
- 2.3.13 Some social media sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher/teaching assistant, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work. In some circumstances this could damage the reputation of the school, The Partnership Trust or the profession.

2.4 Protection of personal information

Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 in schools should:

- 2.4.1 never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people;
- 2.4.2 keep their personal phone numbers private;
- 2.4.3 not give their personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents. Where there is a need for homework to be sent electronically the school e-mail address should be used;
- 2.4.4 understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.

Staff and those adults defined in paragraph should **not**:

- 2.4.6 use school ICT equipment for personal use, e.g. camera or computers;
- 2.4.7 use their own mobile phones to contact pupils or parents.

2.5 Communication between pupils/adults working in school

- 2.5.1 The school normally provides a work mobile and e-mail address for communication between staff and pupils where this is necessary for particular trips/assignments. Adults should not give their personal mobile numbers or personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents for these purposes.
- 2.5.2 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
- 2.5.3 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. They should also be circumspect in their communications with pupils so as to avoid any possible

misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as 'grooming' in the context of sexual offending.

- 2.5.4 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers.
- 2.5.5 E-mail or text communications between a staff member or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 and a pupil outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites. Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the school's policy.

2.6 Social contact

- 2.6.1 Staff or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not establish or seek to establish social contact via social media/other communication technologies with pupils.
- 2.6.2 There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils and staff/those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle or are related. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and should be openly acknowledged with the Headteacher where there may be implications for the adult and their position within the school setting.
- 2.6.3 There must be awareness on the part of those working with or in contact with pupils that some social networking contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge, can be misconstrued as being part of a grooming process. This can also apply to social networking contacts made through outside interests or through the adult's own family.

2.7 Access to inappropriate images and internet usage

- 2.7.1 There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Staff or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and, where appropriate, disciplinary action being taken.
- 2.7.2 Staff or those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should not use equipment belonging to their school/service to access any adult pornography; neither should personal equipment containing downloaded images be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.
- 2.7.3 Staff and those adults defined in paragraph 1.2.1 should ensure that pupils are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links. Schools need to ensure that

internet equipment used by pupils has the appropriate controls with regard to access e.g. personal passwords should be kept confidential.

- 2.7.4 Where indecent images of children are found, the police and Local Authority designated officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Schools should refer to the dealing with allegations of abuse policy and should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.
- 2.7.5 Where other unsuitable material is found, which may not be illegal but which raises concerns about that member of staff, Trust HR or the LADO should be informed and advice sought. Schools should refer to the dealing with allegations of abuse against adults policy and should not attempt to investigate or evaluate the material themselves until such advice is received.

2.8 Online bullying

- 2.8.1 Online bullying can be defined as ‘the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.’
- 2.8.2 Prevention activities are key to ensuring that adults are protected from the potential threat of online bullying. All adults are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the potential threat of online bullying. Following the advice contained in this guidance should reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands.
- 2.8.3 If online bullying does take place, employees/adults should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails and are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site.
- 2.8.4 Adults may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representatives or another colleague to support them through the process. Staff will also have access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance Programme, telephone 0800 030 5182, a free 24 hour confidential counselling and advisory service, (subject to appropriate funding arrangements).
- 2.8.5 Adults are required to report all incidents of online bullying to their line manager or the headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

2.9 Critical incidents

- 2.9.1 In the event of unexpected or traumatic events occurring in the lives of members of the school community, adults are expected to remain professional and respectful at

all times and refrain from posting comments on social media relating to circumstances surrounding the event and/or personal responses to this.

- 2.9.2 In the event of a critical incident affecting the school community, the following message will be sent to staff:

You may be aware of a recent significant/traumatic event within the school community. We ask you to respect the family's privacy and sensitivities by not posting comments. We will inform you through the normal channels of any relevant developments.

Section 3: Links with other policies

- 3.1.1 This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (and any updates thereto)
- Computing Policy including Acceptable Use
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People 2019 (and any updates thereto)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- 3.1.2 All staff must adhere to, and apply the principles of this document in all aspects of their work. Failure to do so may lead to action being taken under the disciplinary procedure.