

# Social media policy

## Arunside School



**Approved by:** FGB (with P&R Focus)

**Date:** December 2023

**Last reviewed on:** March 2021

**Next review due by:** December 2026

Date	Section	Policy review updates:
24/11/2023	D	Amend name of Relationship and Behaviour policy to reflect recent update
24/11/2023	D	Remove reference to the Complaint Policy and amend to read: seek to redress this by sending a letter as per the template shown in Appendix 1.

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that the use of social networking websites brings risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social networking websites are to be used by school staff, governors, visitors, parent helpers and pupils at Arunside Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four key areas:

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**
- B. Use of social networking by staff and volunteers in a personal capacity**
- C. Comments posted by parents/carers**
- D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

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

In terms of private use - Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered on social networking websites. This includes Facebook, Instagram and apps.

Social networking websites should not be used / accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher, and for a purpose clearly linked to a relevant learning objective. If social media websites are being used by a class to aid learning, then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate, and how they should be used.

#### **B. Use of social networking by staff and volunteers in a personal capacity**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff, governors and adult volunteers will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important to protect both the professional reputation of staff, and the reputation of the school by ensuring that personal accounts are used in an appropriate manner and do not conflict with responsibilities to Arunside School.

Staff, governors and volunteers must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16). Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts. Teaching Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use) and should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.

It is not appropriate for staff, governors or volunteers to make comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body. Neither should they post sensitive information, opinions about Arunside Primary School or pictures of school events. Privacy settings on all social media should be regularly reviewed to give an appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality, and ensure that it is maintained. Where staff or governors are directly asked for an opinion about the school on social media, a polite referral to the school's website for information, or the school office/Headteacher for comment, is appropriate.

**Inappropriate use of social media should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.**

#### **C. Comments posted by parents/carers**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media. 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.

- We understand that parents use social media to network with each other and share information such as dates for events, topic or activity information, for example. We ask that this is done privately and with sensitivity, to ensure the privacy of pupils is always maintained.

#### **D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

The school's **Relationship and Behaviour** 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 to redress this by sending a letter as per the template shown in Appendix 1.**

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

#### **Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy**

Children are not allowed to have mobile phones in school. See online safety policy.

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records (The Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS 2007).

**Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their own records during the school day.**

#### **Procedures**

- Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the school will notify parents that pupils may be photographed or filmed at school or on events/trips and the images/recordings may be used for educational purposes. The school will always seek parental consent to utilise images for other purposes, e.g. for the use of building passes or media promotions.
- Photographs and recordings stored on the school network, which is password protected, may be retained until the school ceases to operate, should this occur then all photographs will be shredded or deleted from the school network.
- The school's digital cameras and iPads must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit).
- Photographs are printed in the setting by staff and images are then removed from the camera memory.
- Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school.
- **Visitors may only use their phones in the foyer or outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.**
- The use of cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets.
- Staff are asked not to make personal calls during their working hours when working directly with children. However, in urgent cases a call may be made or accepted if deemed necessary and by arrangement with the Head Teacher.
- All school cameras, iPads and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.

Policy review by Headteacher and adopted by Governors 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Appendix 1

Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Site

Dear Mr/Mrs.....

It has come to the attention of the Governing Body that inappropriate comments regarding the school/members of the school community have been made on a social networking site, (insert the name of the site here) .....

As these comments do not comply with the expectations set out in the school's Social Networking Policy you are respectfully asked to remove them from the website.

We would encourage you to enter into productive communication with the school in order to resolve any outstanding differences. The school has an 'open door' policy with regard to dealing with parental communication and there are also policies in place such as the Complaints Policy if required.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governing Body