Pleasant Street Primary School

Social Media Policy

September 2023

Review Date September 2024

Pleasant Street Social Media Policy

'Pleasant Street Primary School pledges itself to be a place where uniqueness is celebrated and all individuals will find safety and respect for themselves, their families and their way of life.'

1. **Introduction**

1.1 Pleasant Street Primary School recognises its statutory responsibilities related to employment. Day to day management of staff is delegated to the Headteacher; ultimate responsibility lies with the Governing Body.

1.2 The Governing Body of Pleasant Street is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites has become a very significant part of life for many people. They provide a positive way to keep in touch with family, friends and colleagues, and can be used to exchange ideas and thoughts on common interests. Examples of such sites include, but are not limited to, blogs (short for web logs), MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, YouTube, Windows Live Spaces, LinkedIn, forums, bulletin boards, multiplayer online gaming, chatrooms and instant messenger apps.

1.3 The Governing Body will ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy and any other related ICT protocols. This policy will be easily accessible to staff and the Headteacher will make any new or temporary staff aware of this policy.

1.4 The Governing Body expects staff to keep a professional distance from students and to make a clear separation between their private social lives and those of students. Social networking between staff and students is prohibited. The exception to this is where the school social networking sites as a communication tool with parents, the community and the wider population (see 6.14)

1.5 It is important that all staff are able to use technologies and services effectively and flexibly whilst ensuring that they do not make themselves vulnerable. The Governing Body must balance this with their duty to safeguard students and the reputation of the school and the wider community.

2. **To whom does this policy apply?**

This policy applies to all employees, governors and volunteers at the school.

3. **Aims:**

- to enable staff and volunteers to use social networking sites safely and securely

- to ensure staff and volunteers are aware of the risks associated with inappropriate use of social networking sites
- to safeguard staff and volunteers with respect to use of social networking sites and make sure they do not make themselves vulnerable
- to ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard students and the reputation of the school
- to ensure duty of care towards staff and volunteers adversely affected

4. Legislation

This policy has taken account of the following legislation:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006

5. Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

a) ensure this policy is implemented
b) ensure that all staff and volunteers have access to this policy and all new employees and volunteers are made aware of it
c) seek professional advice and support from the Human Resources provider when necessary.
d) take appropriate action, up to and including referring the matter to the police in the case of staff and volunteers being subjected to abuse on social media.

The Headteacher will:

a) know this policy and make sure that staff and volunteers also understand the policy and their own responsibilities
b) ensure that staff and volunteers understand the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of inappropriate use
c) instigate disciplinary procedures where appropriate
d) seek advice from HR providers where necessary in the case of potential misuse

Staff will:

a) behave responsibly and professionally in connection with their use of social networking sites
b) co-operate with the Headteacher and Governing Body in implementing this policy

6. Use of Social Networking Sites

For their own security, employees should regularly review their privacy settings on all their social networking sites; however all communication via social networking should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be

made available intentionally or otherwise to an audience wider than that originally intended. If in doubt guidance should be sort from an appropriate manager.

6.1 Staff must not access social networking for personal use through school information systems or using school equipment

6.2 Staff must not accept students as friends - personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional, and makes staff vulnerable to allegations

6.3 In no circumstances should staff post photographs of students, except where the staff member's own children attend the school. In these circumstances, staff members may post images of their own children and friends at social events; members of staff should take care to ensure the suitability of the images and that they are not posted in relation to the school.

6.4 Staff are advised not to be friends with recent students or parents; the potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking

6.5 Staff must not place inappropriate photographs on any social network

6.6 Staff must not post indecent remarks

6.7 If a member of staff receives messages via social networking that they think could be from a student, they must report it to their line manager and contact the internet service or social network so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action

6.8 Staff are advised not to disclose their affiliation with the school on their profile(s), or write about their work; or any stakeholders within the school.

6.9 Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.

6.10 Staff must not disclose any information about the school that is not yet in the public arena

6.11 Staff must not make defamatory remarks about the school / colleagues / students / parents or post anything that could potentially bring the school into disrepute.

6.12 Staff should not disclose confidential information relating to their employment at the school

6.13 Staff should avoid language which could be deemed as offensive

6.14 Where a school uses social networking for communication purposes, these networks can be accessed via school equipment. School will monitor this closely. Any misuse or abuse by staff, students or the wider community should be reported to the Headteacher

7. Breaches of the Policy

7.1 The Governing Body does not discourage staff from using social networking; however staff should be aware that they will take inappropriate use of social networking seriously. Any posts or comments which could be deemed online

bullying or harassment will be dealt with in the same way as other instances of bullying or harassment.

7.2 The Headteacher may take disciplinary action in the case of allegations of inappropriate use of social networking, depending on the seriousness of the allegations.

7.3 There may be instances where the school would be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour where there are concerns about its legality

7.4 From time to time, staff and volunteers at school may be subject to abuse on social networking sites in connection with their role in school. Any such abuses should be reported immediately to the Headteacher, who will inform governors and take whatever action is possible to deal with the situation and support the affected colleagues.

Policy Written by: Mr. N Verdin

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