



Executive Headteacher: Mrs J McKeown

Initial Policy date	May 2018	Next scheduled review	November 2023
Governor approved	29 March 2023	Key person/people	HT
Model Policy		Model localised	Yes
Pupil leadership team review		Y / N N/A	

SOCIAL MEDIA and Online COMMUNICATION POLICY

Principles:

There are significant benefits for communication, engagement, collaboration and learning via the internet and social media however, alongside this there are risks associated with users such as employees, pupils and the wider School community (Online Safety Policy and Guidance – Hampshire County Council). It is, therefore, important that we use the following policy to ensure all members of our community are safeguarded and the accounts are used appropriately.

- i. The Malicious Communications Act 1998 states that it is an offence to send another person a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys: a message which is indecent or grossly offensive; a threat; or Information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- ii. Section 1 of the Defamation Act 2013 says that an individual is guilty of an offence where he/she publishes a statement that causes, or is likely to cause, serious harm to the reputation of the claimant.
- iii. Employees, pupils and parents/carers have the right to be protected from Cyberbullying which includes: making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in online forums and, the use of mobile telephone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation and, posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (HCC Safeguarding Policy, 2019).
- iv. The Protection from harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- v. The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 will be observed regarding the use of identifiable information in accordance with our Data Protection policy.

The bullying of employees is always unacceptable, including that which takes place on online forums; this includes the posting of derogatory comments about employees (as well as pupils, parents and carers) which is considered to be a form of Cyberbullying (DfE: ‘Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff, 2014).

Practice:

- i. The School’s social media accounts should be used appropriately, in line with the School ethos and values, by all partners, in order to celebrate our community.

- ii. Photos and information will be posted by employees via the School office/ designated person. Photos of pupils will be crosschecked to ensure that usage is in compliance with the School Data Protection Policy and that Parents/Carers have given permission for their child's photo to be used for School publicity purposes.
- iii. If any person would like to discuss a matter then they should on an individual basis contact the School office or appropriate colleague as per the School website, in order to resolve the situation. Parents/carers are asked to avoid using social media forums and groups such as WhatsApp to air grievances as the subject of the complaint cannot easily defend themselves and is therefore a potential victim of cyberbullying (Home-School Agreement).
- iv. If a person uses an account contrary to the School's ethos and values, the School and individual reserves the right to take one or more of the following actions:
 - (If a pupil) a colleague will speak to them and contact parents.
 - 'Block' said person from accessing the account or sending emails.
 - Contact the person in order to resolve the situation.
 - Pass the details to the police.
 - Inform the School's legal services.
 - Employees may seek legal action against the alleged perpetrator
 - The School may apply Annexe A of the School's 'Complaints Policy' for dealing with harassment or aggression.