

## **ALDERLEY EDGE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY – SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

#### **What is Social Networking?**

Social networking is a platform to build social networks or social relations amongst people who, share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. These online communications and social media include software, applications, email and websites, which enables users to interact, create and exchange information online.

This content may include text, pictures or video and sometimes the combination of all three. Increasingly these sites and services are accessed and updated through mobile devices rather than desktop or laptop computers.

#### **This policy aims to...**

- ✓ Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by the whole school community;
- ✓ Safeguarding pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- ✓ Safeguarding the reputation of the School on social networking sites;
- ✓ Clarify what the School considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by individuals;
- ✓ Set out the procedures that the School will follow when it considers individuals have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the School, its staff, families or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the School;
- ✓ Set out the action the School will consider taking if individuals make inappropriate use of social media networks.

#### **Alderley Edge Community Primary School Behaviour Principles**

The Governing Board at Alderley Edge Community Primary School have determined that the following behaviours are our minimum expectations of all members of our whole school community including children, staff, parents, governors and volunteers.

- ✓ Every child understands they have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and learn free from the disruption of others
- ✓ All children, staff and visitors are free from any form of discrimination
- ✓ Staff and volunteers always set an excellent example to pupils
- ✓ Rewards and sanctions are used consistently by staff, in line with the behaviour policy
- ✓ The behaviour policy is understood by all members of the school community
- ✓ The exclusions policy explains that exclusions will only be used as a last resort, and outlines the processes involved in permanent and fixed-term exclusions
- ✓ Children are helped to take responsibility for their actions and understand the consequences
- ✓ Families are involved in behaviour incidents to foster good relationships between the school and children's home life

The governing board also emphasises that violence or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated in any circumstances.

This written statement of behaviour principles is reviewed and approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee of the Governing Board annually

### **Appropriate Use of Social Media**

Social networking sites have the potential to enhance the learning and achievement of children and enable individuals to access information about the School and provide feedback efficiently and easily.

In addition, the School recognises that individuals will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances.

As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the School, its staff, its pupils, or anyone associated with the School:

- ✓ Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- ✓ Would private and confidential discussions with the School be more appropriate? For example – if there are serious allegations being made/concerns being raised. Social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people. Please contact the School to discuss any concerns you may have and follow the complaints policy which is available on the school website or on request from the school office.
- ✓ Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals?
- ✓ The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the School or associated individuals; any detrimental harm that the School or individuals may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have.

### **Inappropriate Use of Social Media**

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations and/or concerns about the School (and those associated with it), it is inappropriate to do so.

Other channels, such as private and confidential discussion with the School, or using the School's formal complaints policy are much better suited to this.

The School and the School's Governing Body considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. This is a non-exhaustive list and intended to provide examples only.

- ✓ Making allegations about staff and/or pupils at the School
- ✓ Making complaints about the School, pupils, parents or the staff
- ✓ Making defamatory statements about the school, pupils, parents and/or staff

- ✓ Posting negative or offensive remarks/comments about specific/individual staff members or pupils
- ✓ Posting comments about the appearance or image of a member of staff or a pupil;
- ✓ Posting racist or homophobic comments;
- ✓ Posting comments which incite others;
- ✓ Posting comments which threaten violence or intimidate.

The School works hard to teach children about the appropriate use of Social media but it is ultimately parental responsibility to ensure that their children behave appropriately as access to social media platforms more often than not takes place in the home environment.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking or internet sites in an inappropriate manner.

It is expected that parents and carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online.

Parents and carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

Parents must realise they are responsible and accountable for any actions their child/ren make in relation to inappropriate use of social media.

### **What our School will do**

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

Therefore, as a first step, the School will usually discuss the matter with the individuals to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking sites in question immediately.

If individuals refuse to do this or should the post(s) be deemed as slanderous, bringing the reputation of the school or individuals into disrepute then the School will consider taking some or all of the following actions:

- ✓ Set out the School's concerns to the person in writing, giving them warning and requesting that the material is removed immediately;
- ✓ Hold a meeting with the individual to discuss the matter further with the Head Teacher and/or Governors;
- ✓ Contact the Police where the School feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment or incitement) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a prejudicial element, is considered to be obscene or is threatening violence;
- ✓ Contact the host/provider of the specific Social Networking Site to complain about the content of the site and ask for the removal of the information;
- ✓ Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information that has been posted is defamatory in any way or the circumstances warrant this;

- ✓ 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 the school website, VLE or forum;

Any action taken by the school will be in direct response to the nature of the comments posted by the individual and subsequently the School may engage legal advice or the Police without firstly communicating this to the perpetrator.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the School's Complaints Policy and procedure.

### **Conclusion**

We hope that this policy will help ensure that everyone uses social networking sites appropriately.

### **Links with other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidelines:

- 21. Positive Behaviour Management
- 76. Exclusion
- 27. Equal Opportunities
- 68. Prevention and Managing of Bullying
- 74. Racial Equality
- 36. Child Protection and Safeguarding
- 107. Peer on Peer Abuse
- 13. Additional Needs

**Reviewed** minimum every 2 years

**Next Review Date** January 2024