

Adlington St. Paul's Church of England Primary



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'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart'. Colossians 3 v 23

Parental Use of Social Networking Policy

Document Approval

This document was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body as appropriate and effective.

Signed		
Date		
Name	Mrs Julie Charnley	Father David Arnold
Position	Headteacher	Chair of Governing Body

Document Review

The Governing Body will review this policy to ensure that it is appropriate and effective whenever necessary, and not less than once every three years.

Document Control

There is one controlled paper copy of this document located in the School Office.

The master electronic copy is held within a designated folder. The latest issue will be marked with the highest number, ie Issue 2 is later than Issue 1. Files in the process of being edited have the words 'In Progress' in the file name.

All other copies (electronic and paper) are uncontrolled.

Document History

Filename: Parental Use of Social Networking Policy				
Issue No:	Description of Change	Author	Checked	Date
1.0	Agreed by staff and Governors	JAC	AM	April 2019
2.0	Review Date			April 2022

PARENTAL USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES POLICY

Overview

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff. This document sets out St Paul's CE Primary School's approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents have used such facilities inappropriately. When we have referred to "parent/carer" in this document, we also include carers, relatives, or anyone associated with St Paul's CE Primary School.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with St Paul's CE Primary School from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of St Paul's CE Primary School from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what St Paul's CE Primary School considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents;
- Set out the procedures St Paul's CE Primary School will follow where it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of St Paul's CE Primary School, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with St Paul's CE Primary School; and
- Set out the action St Paul's CE Primary School will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about St Paul's CE Primary School and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, St Paul's CE Primary School recognises that many parents and other family members 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 St Paul's CE Primary School, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with St Paul's CE Primary 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 St Paul's CE Primary 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.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified, particularly if St Paul's CE Primary School has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to St Paul's CE Primary School; any detrimental harm that St Paul's CE Primary School may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns, it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion, or using a formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

St Paul's CE Primary School considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites.

(This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils/cyber-bullying
- Making complaints about individuals at St Paul's CE Primary School;
- Making defamatory statements about the School or staff at St Paul's CE Primary School;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at St Paul's CE Primary School;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

Procedure St Paul's CE Primary School will follow if inappropriate use continues

St Paul's CE Primary School will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, St Paul's CE Primary School will usually discuss the matter with the parent/carer to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner St Paul's CE Primary School considers inappropriate, St Paul's CE Primary School will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out St Paul's CE Primary School's concerns to you in writing, giving you a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the Police where St Paul's CE Primary School feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, St Paul's CE Primary School may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.

At all times, we encourage parents/carers to use social networking to communicate positively.

Agreed: April 2019

Review Date: April 2022