Barkisland CE (VA) Primary School

Social Media Policy

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, school staff, governors, visitors and parent helpers at Barkisland CE (VA) Primary School.

There are six key areas:
1. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
2. The use of social networking by staff in a personal or professional capacity
3. Comments posted by parents/carers
4. Dealing with incidents of online bullying
5. Disciplinary action over social media use
6. If staff have any concerns

The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to the use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for the purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

The use of social networking by staff in a personal or professional capacity
It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines for staff are:
• Staff must never add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16)
• Staff are strongly advised not to have parents/carers as 'friends' on their personal accounts.
• Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues (including Governors). This includes using the school name.
• Staff must not use Social Media Networking in lesson time for personal use.
• Staff should only use Social Media Networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher Standards, the school AUP and school risk policies.
• Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality e.g. 'friends only' (including settings on photographs).
• Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People'.
• Staff deemed to be using Social Media Networking inappropriately (including disregard for any section of this policy) should be referred to the Head Teacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

Comments posted by parents/carers
Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking (See Barkisland Primary School's Social Media Policy for parents). Methods of school communication include the school prospectus, website, letters, verbal discussions, text messages, and the use of Twitter, Facebook & Instagram.

The school's social media pages will be used to inform parents and carers of what is happening in school. Parents/Carers 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. If parents/carers wish to contact the school this should be done directly by telephone or email in order to get an accurate and timely response to any specific questions they may have. The school's social media accounts will not be monitored as regularly as other

channels of communication. Staff should never comment/communicate to others via social media using their own personal social media accounts. The school account should only be used for this purpose.

Parents should not post malicious, derogatory, unfounded or fictitious comments on social networking sites or in group What's App chats about any member of the school community or the school in general. Any concerns or complaint should be dealt with in line with the school's policies on these.
We would expect that other where these posts are seen by parents, they inform the school of the contents and the author.

Dealing with incidents of online bullying

The school's Anti-bullying 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 networking by parents, the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/ Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

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 Head Teachers

Disciplinary action over social media use
All staff are required to adhere to this policy. Staff should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the school, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

Similarly, where there is a serious breach of this policy, action may be taken in respect of other members of staff who are not employees (volunteers) which may result in the termination of their appointment.

The head teacher should take advice from Calderdale Council's human resources team before considering disciplinary action.

If staff have any concerns
When using social media, staff may have a concern about what they are seeing or being told by another user which has safeguarding implications or may cause harm to the reputation of the school and/or its community. If staff have any such concerns they should contact the head teacher, the named safeguarding contact in school for advice.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil (or group of pupils) or parent has made inappropriate/insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they should consider reporting this to the head teacher so that the appropriate process can be followed, and support can be offered to the employee.

To be read in conjunction with:
• Keeping children safe in education
• Antibullying policy
• Social Media Policy for parents
• Communications policy
• The school's Acceptable User Policy
• Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People

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