

Blossom Lower School and Upper House



Digital device and social network policy

Foundation stage, Primary, Secondary, Post 16

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This policy is subject to further review which reflect technological advances, or
changes to statutory Safeguarding directives/LA advice

POLICY FOR SOCIAL NETWORK USAGE AND DIGITAL DEVICES

Social Networking

This is a way of communicating using mobile phones, iPads or any other similar devices and/or online sites. It may be between individuals and/or groups. The most common social network sites used by pupils at present are:

- Facebook
- Blackberry Messenger (BBM) and WhatsApp
- Twitter
- Instagram
- X-Box Live
- iMessage
- Snapchat
- We-chat
- Facetime
- Flipgram
- Flickr
- Tumbler

This list may be added to as and when new sites are being used or access by pupils.

Digital devices

This list includes (but is not exhaustive):

- Mobile and Smart Phones
- Smart watches
- iPads/iPods
- Recording devices
- Items containing a SIM card

This list may be added to as and when new sites are being used or accessed by pupils

Overview:

This policy has been adapted as the result of a growing number of problems arising in relation to our pupils' use of Social Network sites, mobile phones and smart watches. For the most part, these issues are as a result of Social Network activity which happens out of school hours, but are either reported back to school or creates difficulties within school. This includes pupils using Smart devices to communicate with friends and others external to the school, which could potentially cause Safeguarding concerns and are a distraction to learning.

Note: The Facebook website is blocked during school hours. Pupils are unable to access this site at school on school computers. Staff are only able to access this site before 8.30am, between 11.45am and 2.05pm, and after 5.00pm. This is overseen by the I.T. Manager, Michael Dupree.

In **Secondary and Primary**, pupils are not allowed to use their mobiles during the day. Mobile Phones may sometimes be required in a lesson such as Functional Skills, to be used only at the request and under the guidance of the teacher or therapist. Pupils must also not use Smart watches or devices for gaming or communication purposes. Phones and Smart watches must be handed into Group Leaders during morning registration and are returned at home time. Smart watches and devices are treated as though they were a mobile phone, given the extent of communication which can be made by them. Key Stage Four pupils are allowed to keep their phones in their lockers and can only use their smartphones on request of the KS4 art teachers to download specific coursework related photographs under the strict supervision of the teacher, a privilege which will be removed if being abused. Smart watches for KS4 pupils must be switched to airplane mode and not used during the course of the school day.

Where watches are worn by pupils, we do urge that these be in analogue or digital form. There is a notice in Reception asking visitors to switch off any recordable devices during their visit for the purposes of child protection.

In P16, communication needs are different, as staff/students need to be in contact whilst on their college placement. There is also a greater focus on developing a greater level of independence, such as with attending college and independent travel. In P16, students entering school may keep their phones about their person but have to put them in their bags/lockers. They may only be used at break times or when off-site. They must never be used during lesson times, unless with the express permission from, and under the guidance of the teacher or therapist. If a pupil does not respond to warnings of putting their phone away, the phone is then confiscated until the end of the day. There are signs up in each classroom reminding students of this rule.

Aims of this policy:

To ensure that all Blossom and Upper House staff are aware of the school's expectations regarding their use of mobiles and social networking sites.

To ensure that all pupils are aware of the school's expectations regarding their use of mobiles and other social networking sites and devices.

To have a clear action plan in place so that staff can react consistently to problems that arise in school as a result of pupil's inappropriate use of social networks out of school hours, or mobile phones/smart watches/devices whilst at school.

To have clear and consistent consequences in place for the use of social networking as a means of cyber bullying.

The Issues:

- Previous or current pupils contacting staff using social networking sites, e.g. Facebook.
- Pupils uploading photographs of members of staff to social network sites, without the person's knowledge.
- Staff not ensuring that their Facebook account has the highest security settings.
- Staff not ensuring that their social media profile picture is appropriate.
- Pupils' use of mobile phones, Facebook, or other social network sites for inappropriate or cyber bullying intentions towards another pupil or pupils.
- Pupils connecting with the outside world whilst in school, about which staff have no knowledge or supervision (eg whilst in the toilets). This includes social media and messaging via gaming and other devices
- Pupils recording staff or other pupils without their knowledge or consent.
- All of our pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties and therefore may not recognise the potential pitfalls and danger associated with social networking sites. Pupils are often unaware of their own vulnerability and of the potential safeguarding risks associated with use of digital, recording and mobile devices.

Planned Action to Target These Issues:

For Staff:

All staff have been and will be intermittently reminded that their Facebook account must have the highest security settings and that their profile picture must be appropriate.

The school has a monitoring account specifically for the purpose of checking members of staffs' privacy levels, as the settings are periodically changed by Facebook and therefore they may not necessarily realise that their details can be accessed by non 'friends'. Staff who are unsure how to change their privacy levels can receive help and advice from the I.T. manager (Michael Dupree) or other relevant staff.

Staff have been and will be intermittently reminded not to accept any previous or current pupils as 'friends' on their account. It is strongly recommended that staff do not accept any individual with whom they are not familiar, as there have been incidents of pupils setting up false accounts in order to gain access to a member of staff's Facebook page. All staff were given training during September by the school Data Protection Officer in terms of personal social media and internet security.

This policy will be included in the Induction Information so that all new staff are aware of the expectations regarding Facebook, Social Media and mobile/Smart phone usage. It will also be available on the School website.

EYFS staff are not permitted to use personal cameras or mobile phones to take photographs of children at any time (note that this differs from the main school policy – see *'Staff use of Smart Phones/Tablets in School'* section below).

Staff are not allowed to upload any photos taken of children to social networking sites.

Staff are made aware that they should not discuss working with children online as this could make them a target for people that groom individuals.

Staff should not discuss or post/tweet about school matters; specifically identifying any pupils/staff by name or by association on social networking sites. In addition, staff should not discuss school events or locations of events or trips on social network sites.

If staff members have named their place of work as 'Blossom House School' on their personal profiles on Facebook, they are to refrain from making any school-related comments which include the specific details mentioned above. Staff should also refrain from making general comments related to school.

No staff member is allowed to set up an account on a social network site on behalf of the school without the permission of Joey Burgess, the Principal.

Staff members of the school are not allowed to make discriminatory, derogatory or untrue comments about the school, the pupils of the school or other staff members.

Staff members will refrain from posting any photos or videos of themselves and/or others in any workplace setting on social network sites. Whilst we trial Blossom House School Instagram account 7 members of staff will be exempt from this target.

The Principal will follow up with any staff members who do not adhere to the above-mentioned guidelines regarding professional conduct when using social network sites.

Staff use of Smart Phones/Tablets in School:

Staff are only allowed to use their smart phones or tablets during lessons to take photographs which are stored securely by the school in line with policy. They must not use their personal camera or video application on the phone. Members of staff that are trialling the Instagram account will use smart phones to take photos. These must be deleted from their library and the head of secondary curriculum leads will email staff weekly reminding them to do so. Mobile Phones may sometimes be required in a lesson such as Functional Skills, to be used only at the request and under the guidance of the teacher or therapist'

Photographs and/or videos are only used to record evidence of pupils' progress, or to capture positive events, such as school trips.

For Parents:

Training will be available for parents once a year in order to address the issues of cyber bullying, social networks and safe Facebook usage. In Sep 2019 training for parents and pupils was provided by Childnet.

Every parent of a Year 6/ secondary school signs an ICT and Social Networks contract, thereby agreeing to the school rules on use of school computers, social websites, mobile phones/smart watches and other recording/communication devices.

Parents will also be reminded that from time to time their child will be using Youtube at home for class assignments and that they should please be aware of 'pop-up' advertisements or comments that may be inappropriate and therefore require adult supervision.

Parents will be contacted directly if there are issues related to their child's use of mobiles/smart phones, the internet and/or social networks sites.

This policy will be made available to parents via the school's website.

For Pupils:

- Pupils in years 6, 7, 8 and 9 receive teaching regarding internet safety and cyber bullying issues as part of their ICT and PSHE curricular. This includes safety regarding the use of webcams in computers (and programmes such as Skype) as well as the distribution of photos/images on various sites.
- Every new pupil in KS2 and secondary school signs an ICT and Social Networks contract, thereby agreeing to the school rules on use of school computers, social websites and mobile phones.
- Pupils will at all times be encouraged to report any inappropriate use of mobiles or social networks to their Group Leader, or another member of staff. This has already occurred several times which suggests that this is embedded into the school ethos. Confidentiality will be protected as much as possible, if requested by the pupil.
- The Principal explicitly states the rules regarding the use of mobiles and social networks during Secondary Assembly, at the start of every term. Staff will also be informed of these rules and consequences.
- Training will be given to Secondary pupils at least once a year, or in response to incidents or concerns. Pupils will be taught how to block or report another person who sends them friend requests or messages which they do not like or are offensive.

Rules and Consequences:

The school recognises that due to the nature of our pupils' speech, language and social communication difficulties, the rules and consequences regarding their use of mobiles and social network sites need to be explicit, clear and consistent, as far as is possible. Consequences may also need to take into account the individual's intentions and possible social misunderstandings between pupils, according to the given situation.

Blossom House School adheres to statutory guidance published by the DfE, for searching, screening and confiscation of items which may include digital devices.

Rules

- Pupils are not allowed to attempt to make any contact with staff using any social network site.
- Pupils are not allowed to use their friend's social network accounts to try to contact staff.
- Pupils are not allowed to make false accounts in order to try to contact staff using any social network site.
- Pupils are not allowed to upload or write any material which includes a member of staff, taken on the school's site or during school hours.
- Pupils are not allowed to write or upload any material which is rude or disrespectful to school staff.
- Pupils are not allowed to use any social network site to encourage unkind or inappropriate comments about another pupil, to write derogatory or unkind comments about another pupil, or to use it to arrange or encourage bullying type actions or behaviours.
- Pupils are not allowed to join in with the type of cyber bullying related communication as stated above.
- Pupils are not allowed to set up groups which are disrespectful or rude about the school.
- Pupils are not allowed to use social networks and/or mobile phones, landlines, iPads, Smartphones (as well as any similar devices) to harass other pupils either inside or outside of school. *Harassing* includes contacting lots of times, contacting after being asked to stop and/or contacting with the intention of causing the other distress or upset.
- Pupils are allowed to watch YouTube videos where material is appropriate, relevant, or for educational purpose in class with the permission and knowledge of supervising staff. If students wish to share something from an individual YouTube channel, this must be first be approved by a member of staff and the content must be from the pupil's *own* channel. If content is deemed unsuitable, this may need to be discussed with senior staff and with parents. If content raises concerns around safeguarding, this would need to be escalated to the DSL. Pupils are not allowed to share content from another pupil's individual YouTube channel.

Consequences

- The school has needed to adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to the inappropriate use of social networks and mobile phones and smart devices.

- All of the Year 6 and Secondary pupils' parents are asked to attend one of three discussion groups with the Principal, in order to address the rising number of incidents occurring in school, but most often related to pupils' use of social networks and mobiles out of school.
- If a pupil uses any social networking site, mobile or device to inappropriately contact staff or to upset, intimidate, harass or be deliberately unkind to another pupil, or as a means of cyber bullying, then the pupil will be required to see the Principal, Joey Burgess. The pupil will be presented with the evidence (e.g. a printout of the Facebook page/s), as far as is possible. Parents of the pupil/s involved will be contacted and may be requested to come into school, depending upon the nature of the incident. Appropriate consequences will be put into place depending upon the nature of the incident. The local police may be asked to come in to speak to the pupil/s, if this is felt to be appropriate.
- Parents will be requested to maintain close supervision of their child's mobile, device and internet use out of school hours. This may also require parents to carry out consequences at home as a result of the incident.
- The school will need to rely upon parents' support to carry out these consequences. Parents or the school may need to involve the police if the issue involves continued cyber bullying. Facebook has a page entitled 'Advice for Educators' which may also be of help to staff: [Account/help centre/safety/safety educators](#).
- Whilst the school will support staff and pupils as much as is possible, there is a limit to the school's ability to control the pupils access to and usage of mobiles and the internet out of school hours. The school cannot be held responsible for issues that arise out of school hours; however if a pupil reports an incident, and has evidence such a print out of a Facebook page, the relevant members of staff will speak to the pupils involved and contact their parents.
- The school strongly recommends that parents oversee their child's access to the home computer and internet, as well as other means of using social networking sites, for example through using X Box or Play Station, at all times. This also applies to internet and social networks via mobile phones.

Latest D.f.E Guidance:

- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools \(2018\)](#)
- [Preventing and tackling bullying \(2017\)](#)
- [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff \(2014\)](#)
- [Teaching online safety in school 2019](#)

Other policies of relevance:

Behaviour Management
Anti-Bullying
Safeguarding and Child Protection