

RIVERSDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

Date:

Review Date:

Signed: _____ (Governor)

Signed: _____ (Headteacher)



Maintaining an online presence is vital for schools, not only in terms of keeping the school community up to date with school events, but also in terms of attracting potential enrolment. Having a school website is an essential part of this, but web users must specifically visit the school website regularly to receive this information. By having a social media presence, the school is feeding school information, news and notices directly into the personal news feeds of parents and the wider school community.

OTHER LINKED POLICIES:

1. Virtual Learning Environment Policy
2. Online Safety Policy
3. Acceptable Use Policy
4. Photographic and Video Images Policy
5. Data Protection Policy & Data Disposal Appendix

CONTEXT

The school has developed one Facebook page and one Twitter account related to the school. These will be fed directly by the Weduc newsfeed and replicate the information that the school has shared with parents/carers via the school communication app. These will be maintained by the staff member allocated the Social Media Coordinator role and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team. No other members of the school community will post on the school's social media accounts and there will be no official school accounts on other social media platforms.

The school is also affiliated with a Facebook group which is maintained by the Riversdale PTC (Parent Teacher Cooperative). Further information on this can be found below.

However, social networking activities conducted outside work, can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. In addition, Riversdale School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of the Riversdale community, with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

AIMS

The specific purpose of having school social media accounts include:

- To continue to advance our school information system with information shared via Facebook and Twitter, along with the existing methods of communication including Weduc and the school website;
- To publicise school events and increase awareness about school fundraising;
- To announce any updated information that appears on our school website;
- To highlight positive school achievements in a forum where they can be shared by the school community;
- To make school announcements;
- To use social media as a means of marketing the school to a wider audience;
- To engage the community that Riversdale serves and to act as a key component of our school's online presence;
- To facilitate communication and networking opportunities between parents, especially new or prospective parents;
- To maintain contact with past parents and past pupils.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Everyone at Riversdale School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat all members of the school community with respect;
- It is important to protect everyone at Riversdale from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites;
- Safeguarding children is paramount and is a key responsibility of all members of the community and it is essential that everyone considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites;
- Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must **not** communicate with children via social networking;

- With safeguarding in mind, staff, parents and visitors are asked to follow school guidelines for using mobile phones in public areas around school and on school premises;
- This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work or at home using school equipment is not permitted, unless for professional purposes and authorised by the Headteacher;
- It is also completely unacceptable to comment on social media about the school or any member of the school community in a negative or derogatory manner.

STAFF OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, children, public in general and all those with whom they work.

Adults in contact with children should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting. The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of school staff.

Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

School staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

TERMS OF USE OF RIVERSDALE PTC's FACEBOOK GROUP:

- The PTC Facebook Group must comply with the expectations of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. Therefore, users must not share any form of personal data that may compromise the safety of any member of the school community, including pupils, parents/carers or staff.
- Under the terms of the GDPR (2018), all photographs and video images of children and staff alike are classified as personal data. This means that an image cannot be used for public display or for school publicity etc. unless there is a lawful basis for this and that the child as the owner of the personal data, or the parent/carers where the child is not of suitable maturity to make such decisions, has been made aware/given consent. For more information on this please see the ***Photographic and Video Images Policy*** on the school website.
- Users should not post anything on the page that could be deemed offensive - inappropriate or harmful comments/content will be removed immediately.
- Users should not share any information that is confidential - if it seems confidential, it probably is. Online "conversations" are never private.
- Users cannot tag photographs of children on the page, as this does not comply with the lawful basis of sharing personal data by which it is sought, e.g. ***Legitimate Interests*** or ***Consent***.
- Users should not engage in giving negative feedback on Facebook, it is more appropriate to deal with the school directly on such matters.
- Users will not mention individual staff members in a negative light on the school Facebook page. The tone of any discussions should be positive and respectful.
- Users should not ask to be "friends" with staff as failure to respond may cause offence.

Users should make sure that any information shared is accurate. School staff should always be consulted on matters of policy and safety.

- Users cannot advertise products and services on our school accounts including the PTC Facebook Group.
- The sanction for breaking any of the terms of use is an automatic ban.

CODE OF CONDUCT: SOCIAL MEDIA

Under no circumstances should members of the community make negative or derogatory reference to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity/event.

The following are also not considered acceptable at Riversdale School:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct, or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities. The school have sought permission from parents/carers regarding the use of Photographic and Video Images and will follow the guidelines as stated within this.

In addition to the above everyone at Riversdale must ensure that they:

- Communicate with children and parents in an open and transparent way using the approved methods of communication.
- Parents/Carers must communicate with staff via Weduc or the school phone number. Contact should NOT take place through email accounts or mobile phones.
- Never 'friend' or 'follow' a pupil.
- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal nor professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of online identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.
- All staff are to make sure that high levels of privacy are set if they choose to use personal social media.
- Mobile phones must not be used on the premises by parents and carers unless permitted by the headteacher.
- All staff that maintain a professional social media account (e.g. Twitter or Instagram) do so separate from the school. Any and all images shared on these accounts must not identify the school or pupils in any way.

POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy, this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. The Headteacher will in turn seek advice from Wandsworth Borough Council where appropriate.

This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to social networking in addition to the legal obligations of governing bodies and the relevant legislation.

SAFER ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

In their own interests, members of the community need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. For staff, this will avoid the potential for children or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment, but for the wider community it also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties or the grooming/sexual exploitation of pupils.

All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.

Members of the community need to ensure that when they are communicating about the school, they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites about employees, children or other individuals connected with the school could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might put the school into disrepute.

MOBILE PHONES/CAMERA/VIDEO RECORDER USAGE

To ensure the safety and welfare of children, personal mobile phones, cameras and video recorders must only be used under the expectations set out in the Online Safety and Data Protection policies.

PROTECTION OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Staff will not give their personal or work e-mail addresses to children or parents. Where there is a need for communication to be sent electronically the school app Weduc should be used. Likewise, staff should keep their personal phone numbers private and not use their own mobile phones to contact children or parents in a professional capacity. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between children and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle or members of the same community. These contacts, however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Staff have a responsibility to make any such contact known to the senior leadership team.

Staff, governors and children should never share their school logins or passwords with other people.

Parent/carer and pupil information is kept secure and will never be shared with other members of the school community, as per the school's Data Protection Policy.

ACCESS TO INAPPROPRIATE IMAGES AND INTERNET USAGE

There are no circumstances that will justify the possession of indecent images of children. Members of the community who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children are illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation.

Staff should not use equipment belonging to their school/service to access any pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.

Where indecent images of children are found by staff, the police should be immediately informed. Schools should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution. Where other unsuitable material is found, which may not be illegal, but which raises concerns about that member of staff, the Headteacher (and in the Head's absence, a member of the SLT) should be informed and that person will seek advice from Wandsworth Borough Council. The school will not attempt to investigate or evaluate the material themselves until such advice is received.

CYBER-BULLYING

Riversdale's definition of cyber-bullying is 'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.'

In order to reduce the potential for cyber-bullying, children are not allowed to bring phones into school. If a mobile phone is brought into school by a child, it must be kept in the main office until home-time and parents made aware. In exceptional circumstances, parents may ask for the office staff to keep safe a child's mobile phone, but consent from the Headteacher must be granted first.

Prevention activities are key to ensuring that our community is protected from the potential threat of cyber-bullying. All members of the community are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the potential threat of cyber-bullying. Following the advice contained in this guidance should reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands. If cyber-bullying does take place, families should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. All are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site.

All are encouraged to report incidents of cyber-bullying to the school. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

POINTS TO NOTE:

- Facebook lists a minimum age requirement of 13, and all parents are reminded that children under the age of 13 should not be on Facebook.
- Other social media apps/sites list minimum age requirements and it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure their children adhere to this.
- Not honouring and respecting this policy, as well as the school Online Safety Policy, Photographic and Video Images Policy and the Data Protection Policy affects the safety of the children and teachers, but also jeopardises the reputation of the school and can have a negative impact on the school with regards to external inspectorates such as Ofsted.

Due to the everchanging nature of information and communication technologies, it is best practice that this policy be reviewed annually.