Social Media Policy

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Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Class Dojo) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

Ringway Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by Ringway Primary School, its staff, parents, carers and children.

Scope
This policy is subject to our school's codes of conduct and acceptable use agreements.

This policy:
- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

Ringway Primary School respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on, the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities
- **SLT**
  - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
  - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
  - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
  - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
  - Approve account creation
- **Administrator/Moderator**
  - Create the account following SLT approval
  - Store account details, including passwords securely
  - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
  - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)
- **Staff**
  - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
  - Attending appropriate training
  - Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
  - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Behaviour
- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of[3] staff, and escalated where appropriate.

- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations
- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse
- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone
The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:
- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images
School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.
- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought annually in line with the updating of pupil's contact information. Parents should be made aware that they can change the consent for photographs at any time by contacting the school office. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes must be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student/pupil pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts.[4] Students/pupils should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to

ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.

- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

- **Staff**
    - o Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer.
    - o School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Ringway Primary School.
    - o Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection.
    - o If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
    - o Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
    - o All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from a school email account.
    - o Staff should not use personal email accounts to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.
    - o Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts.
    - o Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
    - o Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

Where inappropriate personal use of social media is suspected disciplinary action may be taken.

Pupil/Students
    - o Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior5

pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.

o The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.

o Children will read and sign the Acceptable Use Policy annually.

o Pupils are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy

- **Parents/Carers**

  o If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about the Parent and Visitor Conduct Policy.

  o Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school both on school platforms and on personal accounts.

  o Social media should not be used as a medium to air any concerns or grievances. These should be raised in an appropriate manner by contacting school or following the complaints policy.

  o Unacceptable online activity includes, but is not limited to:

    ▪ Social media, whether public or private, being used to fuel campaigns and voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or individual children.

    ▪ Identifying or posting images/videos of children;

    ▪ Abusive or personal comments about staff, governors, children or other parents;

    ▪ Bringing the school in disrepute;

    ▪ Posting defamatory or libellous comments;

    ▪ Malicious gossip;

    ▪ Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or individual children;

    ▪ Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff;

    ▪ Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language;

    ▪ Breaching school security procedures.

Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's Parent Conduct policy.

Monitoring posts about the school

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.

- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to the appropriate policy.