



Rackenfurd C of E (VA) Primary School

Social media policy

June 2018

Objective

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that social media sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped.

The objective of this policy is to clearly explain the ways in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Rackenfurd C of E (VA) Primary School. The policy will also provide guidance on how to deal with any potential pitfalls from using social media, and advice for parents.

Key areas

1. Use of social networking sites by staff (personal)
2. Use of social networking sites by pupils
3. Use of official school social networking sites
4. Guidance for parents
5. Photography and filming
6. Cyber bullying

Use of social networking sites by staff (personal)

It is likely that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking accounts. It is important that their personal accounts are used in an appropriate manner to protect their professional reputations.

- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' on their personal accounts.
- Staff **must not** interact with any pupil or ex-pupil under the age of 18 on social networking sites. Including requesting access to a pupil's profile or accepting a request from a pupil (e.g. friend requests, follows).
- Staff **must not** upload student photos on their personal social networking profiles. Elected staff members can share student photos on the official school profile only.
- Staff **must not** use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff **must** ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after the end of their employment at the school.
- Inappropriate use of social media by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and further action may be taken.

Use of social networking sites by pupils

It is generally understood that children under the age of the 13 are not permitted to register on social networking sites.

- Pupils **must not** access social networking sites during the school day.
- Pupils **must not** attempt to gain access to a staff member's personal social networking profile.
- All mobile phones **must be** handed into the office at the beginning of the school day unless with prior approval.

Use of official school social networking sites

Rackenford C of E (VA) Primary School social media accounts (e.g. Facebook) will be used principally to be followed by staff, parents and other professionals in order to advertise the excellent work by staff, pupils, parents and governors. Similarly, they will also contain information detailing special events in school. The aim of this is to run alongside more traditional methods like newsletters and letters; not to replace it.

- Management of the social media accounts, including uploading of content and safeguarding, will be controlled by elected members of staff and their agency (i.e. The Oxygen Agency).
- School social media accounts will be open to all followers, however the school reserves the right to block accounts deemed inappropriate or offensive.
- Positive referencing, mentions or interactions with the school's social media profile will be accepted, however offensive or inappropriate comments, images or other abusive content will not be accepted. The school maintains the right to delete, block or report interactions that are deemed offensive or inappropriate.
- Pupil's surnames **will not** be published on the school's social media profiles.

Due to the public nature of the school's social media profiles, there will be guidance in place for dealing with any negative comments associated with the school or its staff/pupils.

Guidance for parents

Parents and carers are reminded of their responsibilities regarding their use of social Networking sites. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

- Parents **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.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents should not post malicious, speculative or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Photography and filming

Occasionally we may take photographs or film pupils at our school for educational purposes, including school events such as fairs, plays and trips. These could be used on our social media channels, as well as school newsletters, printed publications such as the prospectus and posted on our website.

There are also times when our school may be visited by the media who will take photographs or film to accompany a story. The story could appear in local newspapers, online news sites or televised programmes.

While we ensure that any photography or film taken of our students is done so in an appropriate manner, we appreciate that some parents may not wish for their child(s) image to be used. We ask every parent to complete a permission form stating their preferences for using images or film of their child by the school, which is kept on file.

- We will not use your child's image for any purpose if it would prejudice the interests of your child.
- We will only use images of pupils who are suitably dressed and will avoid taking pictures or video recordings of pupils in swimming costumes, except in appropriate circumstances, for example a swimming performance.
- We will only use the minimum amount of personal information about your child in any publication, such as first name, school name and possibly year group, and will never reveal full names (unless appropriate), personal email addresses, home telephone numbers or home addresses.
- We will keep your child's images and personal information secure and will destroy individual images when your child leaves the school or give them to you, unless we need them for historical or educational purposes.
- We will not use your child's image for any reason other than those stated, unless we have a legal obligation or power, or have received consent from you.

If you have any concerns about your child being photographed while at our school, or if you have any queries about how these photographs may be used, please contact the school.

Cyber bullying

Rackenford C of E (VA) Primary School takes the welfare of its pupils very seriously, and has a **zero tolerance** to cyber bullying.

- By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Rackenford C of E (VA) Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.
- Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites.
- Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying policy. The school can take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school.
- Poses a threat to a member of the school community.
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school, or its employees/governors.

Where appropriate, legal action will be taken by the school's governors.

Further information about safeguarding can be found in our Safeguarding Policy, available on the school website.