

Barkisland CE (VA) Primary School

Social Media Policy for parents



Introduction

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another; from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia. While recognising the benefits of this medium for new opportunities of communication, this policy sets out the principles that the wider school community are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that all stakeholders at Barkisland School, including pupils, parents, staff and the public at large have confidence in the school. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that the use of social media is responsibly undertaken and that confidentiality of pupils and staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded. All members of the school community must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Tik Tok Instagram and Twitter are now widely used. These forms of media allow people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff.

This document sets out Barkisland School's approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents have used such facilities inappropriately.

When we have referred to "parent" in this document, we also include carers; relatives; or anyone associated with the school.

Social Media Definition

Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums (message boards), weblogs (blogs), microblogging (Twitter, Reddit), social networks (Facebook, Myspace, etc.), podcasts, photographs or pictures, video and virtual game worlds (Moshi Monsters, Club Penguin, etc.)

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

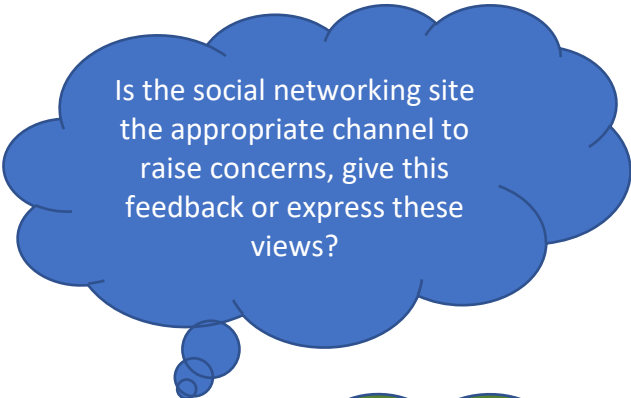
- Clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents;
- Set out the procedures the school will follow where it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the School, its staff or its pupils, governors, and anyone else associated with the School;
- Set out the action the school will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

Appropriate use of social networking sites


The school recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts as well as access to the school's social media accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. The school's social media pages will be used to inform parents/carers of what is happening in school. 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.

Positive contributions to the school social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are welcomed as is sharing or liking a post from the school's official social media account.

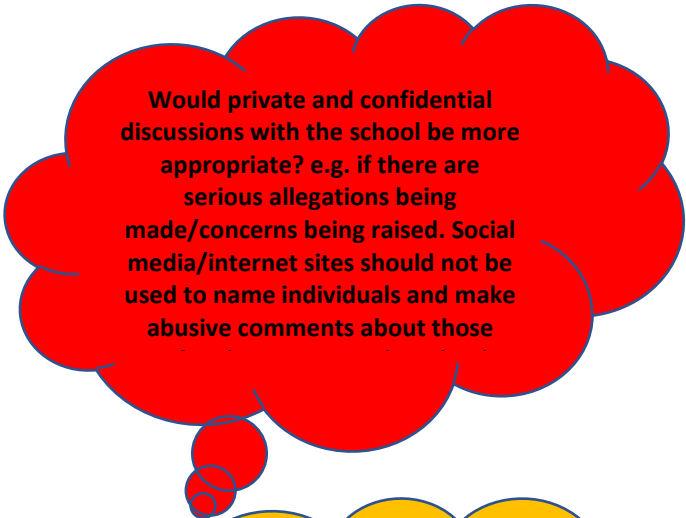
As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the school, its staff, governors, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the school:



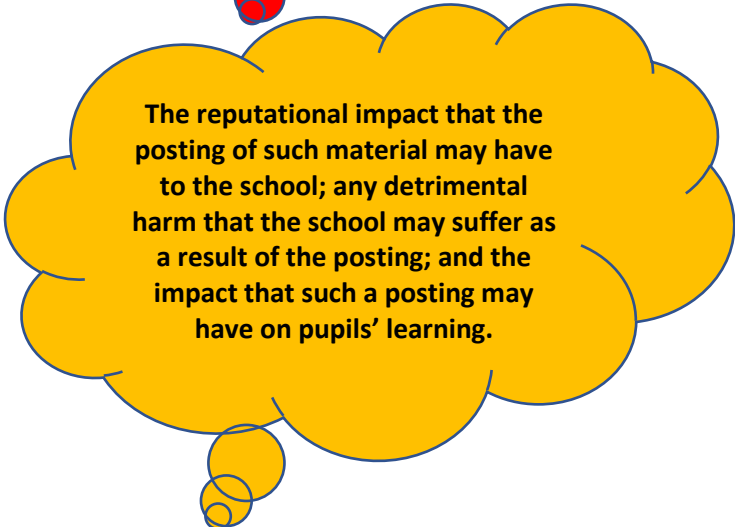
Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?



Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals, particularly if the school has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?



Would private and confidential discussions with the school be more appropriate? e.g. if there are serious allegations being made/concerns being raised. Social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those



The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the school; any detrimental harm that the school may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the school (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the school or using the school's formal complaints procedure are much better suited to this.

The school considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the school/cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the school/staff at the school;
- Making defamatory statements about the school or staff at the school;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at the school;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence;
- Posting personal information about an individual;
- Posting confidential information.
- Posting photographs or videos of children (not your own) that have been taken in school, on trips, at events or around school. Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner.

The school has a **Complaints Procedures Policy** in place should parents wish to make a complaint rather than airing grievances on social media platforms.

It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media. Please take into consideration the terms and conditions for social media sites for example, Tik Tok and Facebook which state that users need to be 13 years of age. Children and parents should also refrain from making contact with staff or families of the staff through social media.

Cyber Bullying

Barkisland CE (VA) Primary School is committed to ensuring that all of its staff, parents, governors, parents/carers and pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Cyber-bullying methods could include text messages, emails, phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms.

Procedure the school will follow if inappropriate use continues

The school will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question.

If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the school considers inappropriate, the school will consider taking the following action:

- Set out the school's concerns to parents in writing, giving parents a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Contact the Police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;

If parents become aware of inappropriate use of social media by their own or other people's children, they should contact the school so that the school can work with the parents to educate young people on safe

and appropriate behaviour. If parents become aware of the inappropriate use of social media by other parents or school staff, they should inform the school so that steps can be taken to remedy the situation.

It is hoped that the use of social media accounts are used positively by all in order to communicate and share information and events more widely and easily. By having a policy, with clear guidance, will help all stakeholders understand their roles so that appropriate use does not occur and further action is not needed.

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