

Blossom Lower School and Upper House



Social Network Policy

Foundation stage, Primary, Secondary, Post 16

**Last reviewed November 2013 Charlotte Lawrence-Smith
Next review due November 2014**

POLICY FOR SOCIAL NETWORK USAGE

Social Networking

This is a way of communicating using 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 What's App
- Twitter/Instagram
- X Box Live
- iMessage
- Whatsapp & BBM
- Snapchat
- We-chat
- Facetime
- Flipgram
- Flickr Tumbler

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

This policy has been written as a result of a growing number of problems arising in relation to our pupils' use of Facebook and other Social Network sites. For the most part, these issues are as a result of Facebook or other Network activity which happens out of school hours, but is either reported to school or creates difficulties within school.

Note: The Facebook website is blocked during school hours. Pupils are unable to access this site at school. 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.

Pupils are not allowed to use their mobiles during the day. Phones must be handed into Group Leader's during morning registration and are returned at home time. Key Stage Four pupils are allowed to keep their phones in their lockers, a privilege which will be removed if being abused.

Aims:

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

- 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.
- 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 their Facebook page, without the person's knowledge.
- Staff ensuring their Facebook account has the highest security settings.
- Staff ensuring that their profile picture is appropriate.
- Pupils use of Facebook, or other social networks for inappropriate or cyber bullying intentions towards another pupil or pupils.
- 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 such as Facebook.

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.
- A member of staff (Tom George– Secondary Curriculum Co-ordinator) has set up 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 Tom George or the I.T. manager (Michael Dupree).

- 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.
- This policy will be included in the Induction Information so that all new staff are aware of the expectations regarding Facebook. Nicola Masefield (Deputy Head) will ensure that new staff are aware of the potential issues.
- Primary, Secondary or Post 16 staff are no longer permitted to use personal phones or cameras to take pictures of children. All departments now have cameras allocated for this purpose. Note that EYFS staff are not permitted to use personal cameras or mobile phones to take photographs of children at any time.
- 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 or school events) on social networking sites.

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.
- A letter will go home to parents at least once a year to remind them to oversee their child's use of the internet in general as well as Facebook. They will be reminded that a child should be 13 or over to have their own account.
- Parents will be contacted directly if there are issues related to their child's use of the internet, social networks and Facebook.
- This Social Networks 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 curriculum (co-ordinated by Val Smith see ICT SOW).
- Pupils will at all times be encouraged to report any inappropriate use of Facebook or other 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 Secondary Curriculum Co-ordinator or Deputy Headteacher will explain and explicitly state the rules regarding the use of Facebook and similar sites 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. Tom George is to oversee this through links with Police or other appropriate resources. 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 Facebook and social networks need to be explicit, clear and consistent. Consequences may also need to take into account the individual's intentions and possible social misunderstandings between pupils, according to the given situation.

Rules

- Pupils are not allowed to attempt to make any contact with staff using Facebook, or any other internet site.
- Pupils are not allowed to use their friend's Facebook accounts to try to contact staff.
- Pupils are not allowed to make false accounts in order to try to contact staff using Facebook.
- 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 Facebook, or any other internet 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.

Consequences

- If a pupil tries to make contact with staff on Facebook (whether there is appropriate or inappropriate content) or sets up groups or upload material which is rude or disrespectful about the school or staff he or she will be required to see either Joey Burgess or Nicola Masefield and receive an initial warning. His or her parents will be contacted to reinforce at home.
- If a further incident happens, the pupil will again be required to see either Joey Burgess or Nicola Masefield. This time, parents will again be contacted and the school may need to request that the pupil's Facebook account is closed and/or inappropriate usage is reported to Facebook. This would also apply to similar social networks sites.
- If a pupil uses Facebook, or another social networking site, to upset, intimidate or be deliberately unkind to another pupil, or as a means of cyber bullying, then the pupil will be required to see Joey Burgess or Nicola Masefield. The pupil will be presented with the evidence (e.g. a printout of the Facebook page/s) and will be given a warning. Parents of the pupil/involved will be contacted and may be requested to come into school, 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 Facebook and internet use out of school hours.

- If another such incident occurs (either to the same or another pupil) the individual's parents will again be contacted. The school will strongly suggest that the parents close their child's Facebook account.
- The school will need to rely upon parents support to carry out these consequences as at present, it is not possible for us to directly request Facebook to close an individual's account. Parents 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 Facebook 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 the 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 such as through X Box or Play Station, at all times. This also applies to internet and social networks via mobile phones.

Written by Nicola Masefield (Deputy Head), Tom George (Secondary Curriculum Co-ordinator) and Charlotte Lawrence-Smith (Behaviour Coordinator)