



SLINGSBY SCHOOL

Social Networking Policy for Parents, Carers and all Associates

Date for Review

January 2023

### **Social Networking Sites / email / twitter/MSN / Facebook/mobile phone use/Snap Chat and others**

In today's society, children, young people and adults interact with technologies such as tablets, computers, mobile phones, games consoles and the Internet on a daily basis and experience a wide range of opportunities, attitudes and situations. The exchange of ideas, social interaction and learning opportunities involved can be greatly beneficial to all and we actively encourage safe and positive use of the internet and social networking.

Occasionally, however, sometimes sites can be inappropriately used as a means of expressing negative, detrimental or offensive views which will not be tolerated by Slingsby CP School.

Social networking sites are not used in school. Our *E-Safety Policy* sets out the school's commitment to ensuring the internet is used safely in school and our *Appropriate Use of the Internet Policy* sets out the school's expectations of staff. We are pleased to report that there have never been any reported incidences of staff using social media or the internet inappropriately.

### **Objectives of this policy**

- To encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by pupils, parents, carers and any associates of the school;
- To safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of networking sites;
- To protect the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- To clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by pupils, parents, carers, and associates;
- To set out the procedures and action the school will follow where it considers there to have been inappropriate or unlawful use of social networking sites to the detriment of the school, its staff, pupils and anyone else associated with school.

### **Appropriate Use of Social Media**

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about school and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the school recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal private social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances.

Positive use is encouraged and we consider appropriate use to include comments such as praising achievements, advertising fundraising events or sending messages of thanks.

Individuals should always *THINK BEFORE TYPING* and consider the reputational and personal impact that the posting of a comment may have to school or on another individual; any detrimental harm or stress that the school, staff member, family or associate may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning and wellbeing.

As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any concerns, views or feedback on any social networking sites (private or public) about school, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with it:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views? If not, do not post.
- What is the benefit of posting these concerns, feedback or views on social media? If there is any chance of a negative outcome, do not post.
- Would private and confidential discussions with school be more appropriate and beneficial? The answer to this will nearly always be yes!
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified? If there is any chance of this, do not post.

If in doubt, do not post!

### **Inappropriate Use of Social Media**

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations, views or concerns about school (and those associated with it), it is **NEVER** appropriate to do so. Where a parent, carer or associate has a concern, this must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned - as per our Complaints Policy (See the Complaints Leaflet on our Website).

Issues raised during term time should be done so in person, by telephone or by email and will be addressed as quickly as possible. Issues raised in school holidays should be done so via email, as emails are checked intermittently; however, it is reasonable that school staff are not expected to deal with non-emergency issues during their holiday time.

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, pupils or any associates or cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints or venting frustrations about the school;
- Making defamatory or undermining statements about school, staff or associates;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about school, pupils, staff or associates;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which verbally or physically threaten violence.

Parent and carers are also expected to ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media and postings.

### **Actions Slingsby CP School will take if cases of Inappropriate Use**

There have been widely documented incidents in the media where people have used social networks and the internet improperly against schools, and in many cases against the published rights and responsibilities of the host. Complaints and concerns centre around home computer/mobile phone/application use where some parents, carers or members of the public have used offensive words, pictures and comments aimed at schools, pupils, school staff and associates. Slingsby School will not tolerate the offensive or inappropriate use of social media.

In the event that anyone is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments, related to Slingsby School, on Facebook or any other social network sites, the following actions may be taken:

1. The school will ask that the person responsible removes such comments immediately and, in the case of a parent, carer or pupil, will be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the breaking of the Home-School Agreements and the possible repercussions of such action.
2. If the person responsible refuses to comply with these procedures and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the school considers inappropriate, the school will consider taking the following action:
  - a. Set out the school's concerns in writing - giving a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
  - b. Report the person responsible to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report content or activity which breach this.
  - c. Take legal advice and/or legal action;
  - d. Contact the Police where the school feels it appropriate;
  - e. If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;

**In accordance with the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the school will seek legal advice and take action against any malicious communications designed to harass or cause distress.**