



Schools Internet Social Networking Policy

Policy Statement

Oak Field recognises and accepts that its employees may keep personal blogs on the Internet and that Internet social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are a useful way of interacting socially with colleagues and friends. The School also recognises that social networking sites can be an effective way to communicate official School business with parents, pupils and the wider community.

While the School respects employee's right to a private life it nonetheless expects professional standards of conduct to be observed. This policy applies both inside and outside the workplace and aims to:

1. Protect the Schools ethos and standing in the community
2. Protect its employees from potentially exposing themselves to allegations of inappropriate use or behaviour.

The policy is in addition to any Council/Schools policies governing use of Council ICT equipment and usage.

Procedure

1. Employees must not access social networking/media sites for private use at any time using the Council/schools IT system. .
2. Employees must not use their own IT equipment for personal use during lessons/working time. Exceptions to this may be for dealing with urgent family matters only.
3. Employees must not post information on a social networking or social media site which is confidential to the Council, School, staff, pupils, governors, parents or anyone connected with the school.
4. Employees must not post entries on any social networking/media sites which are derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory, threatening or offensive about the School, staff or pupils or which in any way could bring the School or Council into disrepute.
5. The School/Council will monitor its IT systems as is deemed necessary in order to prevent inappropriate usage. Hard copies of inappropriate usage or blog entries will be used in any disciplinary proceedings.

6. Employees must not use pictures/images on social networking sites involving staff/pupils on school premises or on off site activities that could be considered inappropriate or cause offence.
7. Employees must not use pictures/images on social networking sites of the school or its grounds that could be considered inappropriate or which could inadvertently include pictures/identity of pupils at the school without their permission.
8. Employees should not enter into personal dialogue with pupils on social networking sites and are advised to routinely check their privacy settings are set to private and contacts/friends lists are appropriate.
9. The above principles apply equally to information or comments posted by employees from their home (or other personal) computers and irrespective of whether the posts are done during working hours or in the employee's own personal time.

Disciplinary action

10. Employees whose conduct breaches this policy may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Schools Disciplinary policy up to, and including, dismissal.
11. Any blog entries/postings made inside or outside the workplace that are defamatory, derogatory, threatening or discriminatory about the Council, School, its employees, pupils, governors, parents or anyone connected with the school, will be investigated as gross misconduct. If substantiated, such conduct may lead to summary dismissal after the due process of the Schools disciplinary procedure has been followed.
12. Evidence of any inappropriate use of social networking sites, as outlined above, e.g. copies of postings/blogs etc will be used in any disciplinary proceedings if this has been produced as basis of allegation by either the person against whom the comments are made or individuals who raise concerns.

GENERAL ADVICE

13. Employees are advised to think carefully about images/information they place about themselves on social networking sites which is accessible to the wider public so as not to expose themselves to potentially compromising situations or ones that could bring the school into disrepute. They should carefully consider any entries they make which are accessible in the public domain and should be mindful of how their views/statements could be interpreted.

To be ratified by the Governing Body