



Social Networking Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy should be read in conjunction with the ICT acceptable use policy.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the Centre's recommendations and requirements for the use of social networking media by its employees. In doing so, the Centre seeks to achieve an appropriate balance in the use of social networks by staff as private individuals, but also as employees and educators, with professional reputations and careers to maintain, and contractual and legislative requirements to adhere to.

Whilst the Centre does not wish to discourage staff from using such sites on the Internet in their personal time, it does expect certain standards of conduct to be observed in order to protect the Centre and its reputation, and also to protect staff from the dangers of inappropriate use.

Accessing social networking sites in working time and/or from School ICT equipment is strictly forbidden, whether the equipment is used at home or at school with exception of activities for the maintenance and updating of the Centres Social media pages, in line with the marketing strategy for the centre .

Eligibility

This policy relates to the use of social networking applications by Centre staff in their own personal time, using their own ICT equipment. For policy regarding use of the centres Social Media pages by staff in line with the marketing strategy, see appendix 1.

The term 'employee' or 'staff' covers all employees/staff of the Centre, including casual staff, agency employees and individuals from partner organisations involved in acting on behalf of the Centre.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Social Networking (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Bebo)
- Media sharing services, for example You Tube
- Micro-blogging applications (e.g. Twitter, Yammer, FMyLife)
- Online discussion forums and opinion sites (e.g. Ning)
- Blogs (e.g. Blogger, LiveJournal, Xanga)

Responsibility & Accountability

Head of Centre and Managers:

- Should ensure that all existing and new staff are familiar with this policy.
- Should provide opportunities to discuss appropriate social networking use by staff on a regular basis, and ensure that any queries raised are resolved swiftly.
- Must ensure that any allegations raised in respect of access to social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately, in accordance with the School's Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Rules.

Employees:

Should ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy.

Should raise any queries or areas of concern they have relating to the use of social networking sites and interpretation of this Policy, with their line manager or the Headteacher. Must comply with this policy where specific activities/conduct are prohibited.

HR/Payroll:

Will advise and support head teachers and line managers on the application of this Policy.

Governors:

- Will review this policy and its application on an annual basis.
- Should ensure that their own conduct is in line with that expected of staff, as outlined in this policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS & REQUIREMENTS FOR THE USE OF ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Working in an educational setting with young people, staff have a professional image to uphold, and how individuals conduct themselves online, helps to determine this image.

Friends/Befriending:

One of the functions of social networks is the ability to “friend” others, creating a group of individuals who share personal news and/or interests.–Staff must not initiate friendships with pupils, or pupils’ family members/friends, under any circumstances.

Staff who maintain social networking friendships with work colleagues, are required to adhere to the requirements below relating to content of interactions.

Content of interactions

Staff are recommended to refrain from making reference on social networking sites to the Centre, its employees, pupils, and their families. If staff adhere to this recommendation then the personal content of an individual’s social networking memberships is unlikely to be of concern to the Centre.

An exception to the above would be content which details conduct outside of employment which affects the individual’s suitability to perform his/her work, makes him/her liable to be unacceptable to other staff or management, or is liable to damage the Centre’s reputation.

If employment at the Centre is referred to, then the information posted would need to comply with the conditions set out below.

- Any references made to the Centre, its employees, pupils and their families, should comply with the Centre’s policies on conduct/misconduct, equal opportunities, and bullying and harassment.
- Staff must not post information on a social networking site which is confidential to the Centre, its employees, its pupils or their families.
- Staff must not post entries onto social networking sites which are derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive in any way, or which have the potential to bring the Centre into disrepute.
- Staff should not use the Centre logo on their own personal social networking accounts, and should not post any photographic images of Centre activities.

- When posting any information onto a social networking site, staff are recommended to consider whether any entry they make puts their effectiveness to perform their normal duties at risk.
- If individuals feel aggrieved about some aspect of their work or employment, there are appropriate informal and formal avenues, internally within the Centre, which allow staff to raise and progress such matters. Social networks are not the appropriate forum to raise such matters. Employees should discuss any concerns with their head teacher/line manager in the first instance. Guidance is also available from HR/Payroll and trade unions.

Where staff use educational/professional networking sites as a professional resource, which are not available to the general public; it is acceptable to make reference to the centre. The above conditions relating to content of postings/communications will still apply.

NB. Staff should be mindful, that interactions between their own personal accounts and the centres social media accounts (for example, “friending” the page on Facebook) will mean they are easier for centre users (customers) to find staff personal social media accounts.

Security

Staff are advised to check their security profiles and privacy settings on the social networks that they use to protect themselves and their personal information, staff are advised to ensure their accounts are private and public access is restricted.

If individuals are not clear about how to restrict access to their content, they should regard all content as publicly available and act accordingly.

In using social networking sites, staff are recommended to only post content that they would wish to be in the public domain. Even if content is subsequently removed from a site it may remain available and accessible. Staff should consider not only how content could reflect on them, but also on their professionalism and the reputation of the Centre as their employer.

Even with privacy settings in place it is still possible that the personal details of staff may be accessed more broadly than the other networkers identified by them. Any reference to such information by pupils and/or their families, which a staff member deems to be inappropriate or is concerned about, should be reported to their line manager in the first instance.

Policy Breaches

Staff found to be in breach of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with the Centre’s Disciplinary Policy & Procedure and the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Rules, with potential sanctions up to and including dismissal.


Information shared through social networking sites, even on private spaces, is subject to copyright, data protection, freedom of information, equality, safeguarding and other legislation.

Where staff work in roles that are governed by professional bodies/professional codes of conduct; the professional rules relating to social networking applied to them may be more stringent than those within this Policy.

Policy breaches should be reported to the Head of Centre in the first instance.

This policy was reviewed by the Governing Body on 5th July 2018

Date to be reviewed: Spring 2020

Signed: _____  _____ *Print Name: Vikki Maxwell*

(Chair of Governors)

Appendix 1: Policy for use of the centres social media pages by staff in line with the marketing strategy.

Purpose:

The centre has set up Social media pages to promote the centre and provide an opportunity for interaction with the wider community and centre users. To ensure the pages are maintained effectively and any risk of reputational damage are reduced to a minimum, the following procedures apply:

1. Only staff who have read and understood the Social Networking policy and been approved by the Head of Centre are authorised to access and maintain the pages.
2. When setting up / maintaining social media pages, the following measures will be put in place to ensure effective monitoring of the sites:
 - Only centre email addresses are to be linked to the social media pages, no use of personal emails to set up /maintain the page s are permitted.
 - The name for Social Media pages is set up as Hardmoor Early Years Centre and the centre logo is clearly present on the page (for example, as the profile picture)
 - Entries by visitors to the page must be approved by the centre before getting published to the live page.
 - Centre dates and events will be approved in advance by the Head of Centre and given to the administrator of the social media accounts to publish.
 - Photographs of children / staff / volunteers may only be posted to the page if the centre holds written consent for use on social media.
 - Posts and updates are to be approved by a member of the management team before being published.
 - Links to external websites, or social media pages are to be approved by the Head of Centre before being published on the page. (Examples may include sharing a restaurants page who have donated a prize for the centres raffle).
 - All content must represent the centre in a positive light. No swearing, slang words or other bad language is permitted.
 - Posts to the social media pages (such as comments and reviews) can be approved by any approved staff member, in line with this policy. Any offensive posts will be deleted. Negative comments / reviews about the centre will be reported to the Head of Centre.
 - Friend requests can be accepted by the Hardmoor Early Years Centre Facebook account. It may be useful to invite “friends” to come to events the centre is running to assist with marketing the centre. Staff are not permitted to discuss personal matters or express personal views when using the Hardmoor Facebook account.

Approved staff: (May 2018)

- Admin team: Cate Torrington, Nichola Jacobs
- Vikki Maxwell (Governor)
- Head of Centre