

# The Oval School



## Social Media Policy

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Date Ratified: May 2017

Signed by: C. C. Hayes  
On behalf of School Governors

Signed by: R. K. Chahal  
Headteacher

Review Date: May 2018

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **Introduction to the Policy**

The Oval School has always embraced and developed the use of new technologies into the curriculum. The school acknowledges that recent developments in mobile and internet based technology has seen an ever increasing number of adults and children making use of social media sites. The most common of these being Facebook and Twitter.

Social networking sites bring schools and their wider communities a whole host of opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with the wider world in new and exciting ways.

The nature of social networking and the mobile technology on which it is deployed allow all users to access it in a flexible and effective way.

As a school we have to plan and ensure that we balance the use of social networking and the associated risks and take necessary steps to protect the image and reputation of the staff, school community and organisation.

### **Purpose of this document**

The aim of this policy is to support and develop all members of the school community to understand the risks involved and develop a structure of good practice that supports innovation and provides a framework of good support, whilst protecting the school's reputation and that of the staff and community.

The purpose of this document is to ensure that:

- The school and the staff are not exposed to legal risks
- The reputation of the school, staff members and governors are not adversely affected.
- That all members of the school community understand how the school uses social media technology to support communication and learning in school.
- That all members of the school community understand what is classed as acceptable behaviour when using social media technology within a professional context.
- That all members of the school community are clearly able to distinguish where information provided via a social networking application is legitimately representative of the organisation.
- To clarify how the school uses social networking and internet based research in the recruitment process.

## **What is social networking technology?**

Social networking covers a range of internet based technologies that have been developed in the past decade to enhance and improve the way we communicate and interact with others. The examples listed below are some of the most common examples in use today:

- **Social Networking Sites: Facebook, Beebo, Musical.ly**
- **Blogs: Blogger, wordpress, edublog**
- **Micro Blogs: Twitter**
- **Photosharing Communities: Flickr, LightRoom, Instagram, SnapChat**
- **Professional Communities: Linked IN**
- **Chat Room / Voice over Internet Services: Skype, MSN, BBM, Google Voice**

The Oval School acknowledges that this is not an exhaustive list and that new websites are set up daily. This policy includes all social media sites both online now and in the future.

## **The role of School Leaders, Governors and Staff**

The Oval School, the staff and the Governing Body have the right to protect and uphold the reputation of the school and staff members. In order to do this the governors, SMT and E Safety officer have devised a code of conduct that is to be followed at all times whilst on school premises.

To protect employees' own professional reputation and that of the school, The Oval School and the governing body reminds all members of staff that all communication via social networking sites must be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore advised that staff follow the following procedures:

- **Staff must not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment.**
- **Staff must not accept pupils as friends – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff vulnerable to allegations.**
- **Staff must not accept current pupils parents as friends (unless they are friends previous to the child starting school) – personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and makes staff vulnerable to allegations.**
- **Staff are advised not to be friends with recent pupils. The potential for staff to be compromised in terms of wall content and open to accusations makes the risk not worth taking.**

- Staff must not provide parents or students with personal contact details, email or mobile numbers.
- Staff must not use personal devices to record images of children or colleagues, any images taken on school owned devices must not be taken off site without the prior consent of the Head Teacher.
- Within school children only have access to Education You Tube. Staff have full access to You Tube they must check a video's suitability and content before use in class. Use <http://safeshare.tv/> to block advertisements and comments.
- Staff must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or disclose personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the Data Protection Act.
- Staff must not disclose any information about the school/Local Authority that is not yet in the public arena.
- When writing emails and other communications care must be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive to others, emails sent from the school domain must be written in a professional manner. Outside of school we recognise that all members of the school community have the right to a private life, but we ask that all employees follow these guidelines to help protect the professional reputation of themselves and the school.
- Staff must take reasonable action to secure private sites, profiles and accounts. If required the ICT co-ordinator and ICT technician is able to demonstrate to any staff member how to change the settings to ensure that their account cannot be viewed by uninvited users. Passwords must not be shared with any students.
- Staff are advised not to place inappropriate photographs publicly on their social networking account.
- Staff are advised not post indecent remarks, or remarks that could be deemed as defamatory or offensive.
- If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile that they think could be from a pupil they must report it to their Line Manager / Head Teacher and contact their internet service or social networking provider so that they can investigate and take the appropriate action;
- Staff are advised not to write about their work but where a member of staff chooses to do so, he/she must make it clear that the views expressed are his/hers only and do not reflect the views of the school/Local Authority. However, all other guidelines in this policy must be adhered to when making any reference to the workplace;
- Staff must not make defamatory remarks about the school/colleagues/pupils or the Local Authority or post anything that could potentially bring the school/Local Authority into disrepute.

- Staff must not disclose confidential information relating to his/her employment at the school.

### **The Role of Parents and Carers**

- Whilst on school premises we ask that all parents and carers follow these rules to ensure that our school environment is protected and safe.
- Mobile Phones must be switched off at the main entrance and not used whilst inside the building.
- Whilst collecting and dropping off children we ask that Parents do not use their mobile devices to take pictures within the school building and playground areas.
- Whilst we are happy for parents to take images of our school events, trips and performances using digital cameras and mobile phones we ask that you do not post them publicly on social media sites or image hosting sites such as Facebook or Flickr. If images are found or reported to the school, we will contact the account holder or the service provider and ask for them to remove them.
- We ask that parents and carers follow our grievance procedures and contact the school office or Head Teacher directly if they have a concern or complaint about a member of staff or an incident that occurred during the school day. Please do not post details of a complaint or grievance publicly on a social media site. Such action could be prejudicial in respect of the formal grievance/complaints procedure.
- Please remember that school and governing body have a legal right to protect the reputation of the school and will use all necessary means to remove any defamatory comments, sites or posts from the internet.
- We ask that parents do not post confidential material including details from meetings, reviews and parent teacher conferences online. Outside of school we ask that parents and carers support the work of the school by ensuring that their children's internet access is supervised and safe.
- Parents and carers have a duty of care and must ensure that websites are filtered using appropriate software. Please contact the school if you require any advice on suitable monitoring software. Please ensure that your children are using age appropriate sites, software and games: Youtube, Google+, Flickr, Facebook legally requires that all users are 13 or older before they can create a profile. Whatsapp has a requirement of 16 or above.

## **The Role of Children**

Whilst on school premises we ask that all our children follow these rules to ensure that our school environment is protected and safe.

- Mobile Phones must be switched off at the main entrance and not used whilst inside the building. Children must hand in their phone to the school office who will secure it in a locked cupboard. Please note the school accepts no liability for damage or loss to mobile devices bought onto school premises.
- Whilst we are happy for children to take images of our school events, trips and performances using digital cameras we ask that you do not post them publicly on social media sites or image hosting sites such as Facebook or Flickr. If images are found or reported to the school, we will contact the account holder or the service provider and ask for them to remove them.
- Please remember that school and governing body have a legal right to protect the reputation of the school and will use all necessary means to remove any defamatory comments, sites or posts from the internet.
- We ask that children do not post confidential material including details from meetings, reviews and parent teacher conferences online.
- We ask that children will support the schools approach to online safety and not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset any member of the school community
- The school makes all children aware that their use of ICT resource both inside and outside of school can be checked and that their parent/ carer can be contacted if a member of school staff is concerned about my eSafety or my use of IT resources. (See Acceptable Use Policy for Further details)

## **Cyber bullying**

This is an ever increasing problem in our society and all parties need to take responsibility for monitoring our children's use of the internet, email and text message facilities.

If Cyber Bullying occurs within school premises or whilst using school equipment it is the responsibility of the ICT co-ordinator to investigate and resolve the issue. (See E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policy)

If children are found to be in breach of our school rules then the school will discipline them following the guidelines set out in the behaviour policy.

If incidents are occurring outside of school either at home or within the community it is the responsibility of the Parents /Carers to contact either the school, or local CPSO who will be able to offer support and guidance.

Where incidents occur outside of school it is at the Head Teachers discretion to discipline pupils. We ask that in the first instance pupils report the incident to their class teacher or parents.

It is important that children do not cause a situation to escalate by posting defamatory comments, emails or challenging other parents or children within the school grounds.

### **Complaints and investigations**

In the first instance a complaint raised by a member of the school community will be investigated by the Head Teacher / SLT following the eSafety policy

If criminal activity is suspected the matter will be referred to West Midlands Police for investigation.

### **Breaches of Policy**

A breach or suspected breach of policy by a school employee, contractor or pupil may result in the temporary or permanent withdrawal of school ICT hardware, software or services from the offending individual.

Any policy breach is grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with the school Disciplinary Procedure or, where appropriate, the Birmingham City Council Disciplinary Procedure or Probationary Service Policy.

Policy breaches may also lead to criminal or civil proceedings against an individual or group.

### **Social Networking and Recruitment**

Currently The Oval School does not check online records, social accounts or search engines as part of its recruitment procedures.

This policy will be amended if new technologies are adopted or Central Government change the orders or guidance in any way

For further information, visit [www.nspcc.org](http://www.nspcc.org)

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Policy Reviewed by Victoria Ward

