

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Using Social Media at Biddenham School

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks.
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected.
- Safeguard all children and staff.
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school.

This document is divided into two parts. The first deals with using social media services as part of teaching or school business; the second looks at how staff should manage their personal social media accounts.

Definitions and Scope

Biddenham School encourages the responsible, professional use of the Internet and social media to support educational delivery and professional development.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, 'microblogging' applications, media streaming, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Google Meet/Hangouts, Windows Live Messenger, Periscope, Meerkat, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Google+, snapchat, tiktok, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, Malicious Communication Act, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, Safeguarding and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies. Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

Remember:

- Nothing is private.
- Nothing can be deleted.
- Everything you share reflects on yourself and the school.

School sanctioned use of social media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be

observed:

- Social media accounts should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by members of staff, and should be linked to an official school email account (with the exception of the schools Facebook page).
- Staff may create their own departmental social media account within the guidelines outlined below with approval from the Network Manager or Headteacher.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate line manager and the Network Manager before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents/carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.
- Social media accounts should not be stored on any device - smartphone, tablet, or computer - where there is a chance it could be accessed by persons not employed by the school.

Personal use of Social Media

These guidelines should influence your use of personal social media accounts while you are an employee of Biddenham International School & Sports College.

- School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with current parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Biddenham School (except where a pre-existing relationship exists).
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- You may not use any process to automatically forward emails to or from a school email account.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts, social media, or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- Staff should not accept any current student of any age or any ex-student of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber, or similar on any personal social media account.

Inappropriate use of Social Network Site

Social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, headteachers, school staff and in some cases, other parents/students. The staff and governors of Biddenham School considers the use of social media websites being used in this way unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children and the whole school community. Any concerns you may have must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Head of Year, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

In the event that any student or parent/carer of a child being educated at Biddenham School is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on any social media sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or student removes such comments immediately. In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or parent to threaten, offend or humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. Thankfully such incidents are extremely rare. We expect that parents would make all persons responsible for collecting children aware of this policy.

Date of Next Review: **March 2023**