HEDDON-ON-THE-WALL ST. ANDREW'S CE FIRST SCHOOL

POLICY STATEMENT FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING
& ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE

1   Scope

This policy and guidance is recommended for adoption by the governing bodies of all maintained schools and academies. It applies to all employees and volunteers at the school who are under the direction of the Governing Body.

2   Purpose

Social networking sites are commonly used as a communications channel, both for personal and business purposes. They provide the facility for people to interact socially (e.g. posting comments, instant messaging, e-mailing, sharing media such as photos and film). They also provide a fast, modern way for organisations to communicate and engage with others. The purpose of this policy and guidance is to set out how the school expects social network users to behave when using social networking for personal and/or business use.

For the purposes of this policy, social networking is defined as the use of any website where information can be shared publicly with others. Examples of such sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and professional body sites.

This policy applies irrespective of how the social networking site is accessed including, but not limited to, access via work or personal computers, tablets and smart phones; it covers anything posted which may be viewed by others.

This policy is consistent with the Guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings, which sets out the wider context in which staff are expected to ensure children and young people are safeguarded.

3   Roles and responsibilities

Employees and volunteers: All employees and volunteers are expected to follow this Social Networking Policy and Guidance. Use of social networking sites which is not in accordance with this or other school policies (including the Code of Conduct and the Guidance on Safer Working Practices for Adults who work with Children and Young People) may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct under the Disciplinary Procedure or may put a volunteer's continuing role at risk.

Headteachers: Headteachers will ensure that all staff are made aware of the policy and guidance e.g. during induction, at staff meetings, through CPD. It is recommended that written records are maintained of the dissemination of the

policy to named staff.

4 General policy for personal or business use of Social Networking

- The expected behaviour of staff is outlined in the school's Code of Conduct and the Guidance on Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People. In addition, this policy and the guidance in Appendix A also applies, particularly where it may be possible to identify an individual as being employed to work at the school;

- Staff using social networking sites should not post any personal information that could jeopardise their own, their colleagues, or their family's privacy or identity. They must not post any personal information about pupils, parents or other parties within the school community;

- When using professional body message boards/forums or sites, such as LinkedIn, comments posted should remain professional and within the boundaries of the topic being discussed;

- The reputation or business of the school, service users, partners or others connected with the school must not be brought into disrepute through use of social networking sites;

- Confidentiality of matters relating to the school or others connected to the school must be preserved, so that the school is not exposed to legal risks covered by copyright, data protection and libel laws;

- Use of social networking sites must at all times be consistent with the school's duty to safeguard children and young people;

- Sites must not be used for purposes which constitute bullying or harassment or for uploading information which may be interpreted as discriminatory or of an otherwise offensive, derogatory or defamatory nature.

5 Specific policy regarding personal use of Social Networking

- Personal use of social networking sites must not be undertaken during working time;

- Personal use of social networking sites must be in accordance with the general policy outlined in 4 above;

- Staff must not initiate or agree to contact with pupils via social networking. This may be viewed as a form of secret social contact which is in breach of the Guidance for Safer Working for Adults who work with Children and Young People;

- It is an individual's responsibility to read the Terms of Service of any social networking site accessed and to ensure that any confidentiality and privacy settings outlining to whom information posted will be available to are understood;

- The individual's work e-mail address must not be used when registering for, or posting on, any websites (not just social networking sites);

- The school's logo must not be used on a personal site;

- Where it may be possible to identify that an individual works at the school, it should be clear that information contained is the individual's personal opinion. Even where this is the case, the principles of this Policy apply. The school's reputation must not be brought into disrepute and the Code of Conduct applies. Reference to the School, staff, Governors, pupils, parents, suppliers/contractors or partner organisations must be avoided;

- When using social networking sites, the right of freedom of expression applies only to lawful conduct. The school expects that staff will exercise consideration for the rights of others and for the reputation of the school.

6 Specific policy regarding business use

- Where the school has its own official social networking site (e.g. Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Linkedin) posting can only be undertaken by those staff who are authorised to do so and in accordance with this policy;

- Business use of social networking sites must be in accordance with the general policy outlined in 4 above.

7 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed as required to reflect changes in legislation or practice.

Revision Record of Issued Versions			
Author	**Creation Date**	**Version**	**Status**
Northumberland HR for Schools (SH)	**19 July 2013**	**1.0**	**Final version agreed with Joint Unions.**
Changed by	**Revision Date**		
Heddon-on-the-Wall St. Andrew's CE First School	**20th January 2014**	**2.0**	**Personalised with School name.**
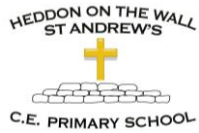
Heddon-on-the-Wall St. Andrew's CE Primary School	10th May 2019	3.0	Changes to School name

Appendix A – Guidance for staff on use of social networking

Conduct, Safety and Security

1   If you are about to post a comment on a site about a friend, associate, colleague, manager, the school or its service users, or anyone or anything else that you think would get you into trouble if you voiced it out loud, then the chances are that it is not appropriate to put it online.

2   Similarly if someone asks you for business, personal or professional information which you would be wary of giving them on a one to one basis then it would be unwise to share it with them over the internet.

Personal use of Social Networking

3   The best stance to adopt with personal use of Social Networking is to think carefully before posting.

   From the school's point of view it is important that you do not:
   - post photos which could reveal any sensitive information;
   - post photos of yourself or colleagues doing anything during working hours which is not related to work and could identify you as working at the school;
   - reveal information about the school on any site if you have not been authorised to do so; or
   - mention the school in any way which could be deemed to negative, damaging or libellous. If you are going to mention work, make sure it is something that you would be happy for colleagues and managers to see.

4   When using social networking for personal use you should be aware that you can be subject to the school's disciplinary procedures if you post comments/pictures/videos that are deemed to breach the Code of Conduct. The timing of any comments posted is irrelevant; if they are deemed to be in breach of any policies or the Code of Conduct then you can still be subject to disciplinary procedures.

5   So, when using social networking personally you should bear the following in mind:
   - even if no-one from work "follows" or "friends" you it does not mean that they will not find out if you post something about them or about the school;
   - there is a difference between saying "Had a bad day at work" and "The school is a bad employer". Anything that identifies that you work at the school or the identity of your employer and undermines its position has the potential to damage its reputation;
   - the same laws apply to anything written online that apply to the written and spoken word; and
   - NEVER give out personal information on public forums.
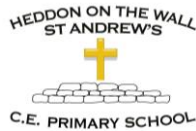
What to do if you come across something online that mentions the school

6   Due to the nature of social media, anyone can comment on anything they want. As such, you may come across postings on the internet that mention or discuss the school in one way or another. These could be positive or negative.

7   If you come across an entry on a social media site that portrays the school in a negative manner then it is important to let a senior manager know in case it is appropriate for the school to respond.

8   Conversely, if you come across something that is praising the school then you should also let a senior manager know so that they can decide if they want to publicise it further.

9   In either scenario, there is nothing to stop you commenting on the information and supporting or defending the school. However, your comments need to be within the conditions as set out in this policy and if you are unsure as to the accuracy of the information then refer to a senior manager first.