Social Networking / Media Policy for people working in school – updated September 2026

Introduction

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram or TIK TOK and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. In addition, Hatch Warren Infant School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites. Social media can be a great asset to schools to help promote and support advertisement but this is at the schools discretion and should be monitored accordingly alongside this policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That safeguarding of the children is paramount
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information should/should not be shared

Key Principles

- Everyone* at Hatch Warren Infant School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.

- It is important to protect everyone* at Hatch Warren Infant School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone* at Hatch Warren Infant School considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.

- This policy relates to social networking outside work and the use of social media to promote and advertise school. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted unless the designated staff and equipment is being used – Year R IPAD 5.

Aims

- To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors, Friends and volunteers at Hatch Warren Infant School with respect to social networking.

- To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Code of Conduct for Everyone* at Hatch Warren Infant School– Social Networking

The following are **not considered acceptable** at Hatch Warren Infant School:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation as it infers that the postings or comments are representative of the school.

- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.

- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school e.g. reference to staff/children/parents, changes in school organisation/structure

- Having a current or former pupil under the age of 18 years old as a friend to share information with.

In addition to the above everyone* at Hatch Warren Infant School must ensure that they:

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.

- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

- Where family and friends have pupils in school and are legitimately linked to staff, extreme care must be demonstrated so as not to compromise the staff members' professional capacity at school.

- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

- If staff receive school related messages from parents through social networking sites, they will not respond to them, asking the parent to contact the school instead.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-hours activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employers' reputation, then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action. Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

- The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Child protection guidance

If the headteacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with the child protection policy
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate via Hampshire Police Child Protection Team.
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, normal steps to calm the parent will be taken and processes explained. If a disclosure comes from a member of staff, confidentiality should be maintained.
- The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.
- If a disclosure is from a child, follow normal processes in your child protection policy will be followed until a police investigation has been carried out

Guidance is given that accompanies this policy with regards to establishing privacy settings.

*In the context of this policy "everyone" refers to members of staff, governors, Friends and anyone working in a voluntary capacity at the school

Using social media platforms in school for promotion and advertising purposes.

- Staff will ensure that any social media platform that is used for the promotion and advertisement of the school complies with the safeguarding and data protection policy.

- All social media platforms will be run by designated members of staff with the correct security access that should not be shared. One of the members of staff is a DDSL.
- Any uploads onto social media platforms should be agreed by the designated staff and or SMT. These uploads should never include children's names, faces or voices.
- All staff participating in social media content should have provided written consent and are aware of the schools code of conduct.
- The school needs a recorded lawful basis and must explain how any footage may be used.
- Social media accounts are solely used for the promotion of the school and will not breach any safeguarding, child protection or GDPR policies that are already in place.
- This platform is not to be used to promote or advertise individual members of school.
- Any social media account should be run by at least two members of staff and no private email accounts should be used to set these up.

Policy to be reviewed bi-annually: September 2028