



**APPLEBEE WOOD  
COMMUNITY  
SPECIALIST SCHOOL**

RESPECT | BELONGING | TRUST | RESILIENCE | ASPIRATION

# **Social Media Policy**

## **1. Expectations**

- The expectations' regarding safe and responsible use of social media applies to all members of Applebee Wood Community Specialist School.
- The term social media may include (but is not limited to): blogs; wikis; social networking sites; forums; bulletin boards; online gaming; apps; video/photo sharing sites; chatrooms and instant messenger.
- All members of Applebee Wood are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner.
  - o All members of Applebee Wood are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, concerns, pictures or messages on any social media services, especially content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- We will control pupil and staff access to social media whilst using school devices and systems on site.
  - o The use of social media using school devices during working hours for personal use is not permitted.
  - o The use of social media during directed time using personal devices is not permitted.
  - o Inappropriate or excessive use of social media during working hours or whilst using school devices may result in disciplinary or legal action and/or removal of internet facilities.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of Applebee Wood School on social media, should be reported to the DSL (or deputies) and will be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour and child protection policies.

## **2 Staff Personal Use of Social Media**

- The safe and responsible use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities such as but not limited to: guides and factsheets.
- Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff (including volunteers) as part of our Code of Conduct and as part of Acceptable Use Policy.

### ***Reputation***

- All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the setting.
  - o Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.

- All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media sites. Advice will be provided to staff by sharing appropriate guidance and resources on a regular basis. This will include (but is not limited to):
  - o Setting the privacy levels of their personal sites.
  - o Being aware of location sharing services.
  - o Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
  - o Logging out of accounts after use.
  - o Keeping passwords safe and confidential.
  - o Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as that of the setting.
- Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of our setting on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the setting, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance with our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.
- Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about pupils and their family members or colleagues will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- Members of staff will notify the Leadership Team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

### ***Communicating with pupils and parents and carers***

- Communication with children both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.) Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from children. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'.
- Any pre-existing relationships or exceptions that may compromise this, will be discussed with DSL (or deputies) and/or the headteacher.
- If ongoing contact with pupils is required once they have left the setting, members of staff will be expected to use official setting provided communication tools.
- Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact pupils or parents, nor should any contact be accepted, except in circumstances whereby prior approval has been given by the headteacher.

- Any communication from pupils and parents received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the DSL (or deputies).

### **3 Pupils' Personal Use of Social Media**

- Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupils as part of an embedded and progressive education approach, via age appropriate sites and resources.
- We are aware that many popular social media sites state that they are not for children under the age of 13, and will remind pupils of this whilst still ensuring that they are taught how to use them safely.
- Any concerns regarding pupils use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying, behaviour and Acceptable Use Policies.
  - o Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools and the sharing of inappropriate images or messages that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- Pupils will be advised:
  - o To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
  - o To only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.
  - o Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.
  - o To use safe passwords.
  - o To use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
  - o How to block and report unwanted communications.
  - o How to report concerns both within the setting and externally.
  - o To remove a social media conversation thread if they are the administrator of such a thread that may have been used in an inappropriate way such as with threatening, hurtful or defamatory content.

### **4 Official Use of Social Media**

Applebee Wood official social media channel is a Twitter and facebook pages:

- The official use of social media sites only takes place with clear educational or community engagement objectives, with specific intended outcomes.
  - o The official use of social media as a communication tool has been risk assessed and approved by the Headteacher.
  - o Leadership staff have access to account information and login details for our social media channels, in case of emergency.

- Official social media channels have been set up as distinct and dedicated social media sites or accounts for educational or engagement purposes only.
  - o Staff use setting provided email addresses to register for and manage any official social media channels.
  - o Official social media sites are suitably protected and linked to our website.
  - o Public communications on behalf of the setting will, where appropriate and possible, be read and agreed by at least one other colleague.
- Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including: antibullying, image/camera use, data protection, confidentiality and child protection.
  - o All communication on official social media platforms will be clear, transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Parents/carers and pupils will be informed of any official social media use, along with expectations for safe use and action taken to safeguard the community.
  - o Only social media tools which have been risk assessed and approved as suitable for educational purposes will be used.
  - o Any official social media activity involving pupils will be moderated if possible.
- Parents and carers will be informed of any official social media use with pupils; written parental consent will be obtained, as required.
- We will ensure that any official social media use does not exclude members of the community who are unable or unwilling to use social media channels.

### ***Staff expectations***

- Members of staff who follow and/or like our official social media channel will be advised to ensure their profile name and picture does not identify them, to avoid blurring professional boundaries.
- If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:
  - o Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the setting.
  - o Disclose their official role but make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the setting.
  - o Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
  - o Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including: libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
  - o Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
  - o Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so.

- o Not engage with any direct or private messaging with current, or past, pupils, parents and carers.
- o Inform their line manager, the DSL (or deputies) and/or the headteacher of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from pupils.

Policy approved by Headteacher & Chair of Governors

Last reviewed Sept 2023

Next review Sept 2024