

# MIDDLETHORPE PRIMARY ACADEMY

## Parents' Social Networking Policy

September 2024

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. This document sets out Middlethorpe Primary Academy's approach to parental use of such sites.

Where we have referred to 'parent' in this document, we will also include carers, relatives or anyone associated with the Academy.

### Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the Academy from the negative effects of social networking sites.
- Safeguard the reputation of the Academy from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites
- Clarify what the Academy considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents

### Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Social networking sites have the potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about the Academy and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the Academy recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the Academy, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the Academy:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would private and confidential discussions with the Academy be more appropriate? E.g. if there are serious concerns being raised or allegations being made. Social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals or the Academy?

- Are such comments likely to have a negative impact on pupils' learning?
- Does the post include a photograph or video of pupils at the Academy? (where said pupil is not your own child)

### **Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents**

The Academy considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the Academy
- Making complaints about the Academy/staff at the Academy
- Making defamatory statements about the Academy or staff at the Academy
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at the Academy
- Posting racist comments
- Posting comments which threaten violence.
- Posting photographs and videos of pupils at the Academy (where said pupils are not your own child/children)

### **Procedure the Academy will follow in the case of inappropriate use of social media**

The Academy will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner, and understands that parents may not always realise they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, discussions will always be had with the individual(s) involved, where they may be asked to remove inappropriate content from the social media site. Where warranted, the Academy will also consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or action where the information posted is defamatory in any way, or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the Academy's concerns to the individual in writing, giving them a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the Police where the Academy feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- Contact the host/provider of the social networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information.
- Block or restrict that individual's access to the Academy's social media pages.

Reviewed: September 2024