



## Digital Communications Policy

### School Policy

New technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people in today's society, both within schools and in their lives outside school. The internet and other digital information and communications technologies are powerful tools, which open up new opportunities for everyone. These technologies can stimulate discussion, promote creativity and stimulate awareness of context to promote effective learning. They also bring opportunities for staff to be more creative and productive in their work. All users should have an entitlement to safe access to the internet and digital technologies at all times.

This policy is set out to establish best practice within school and ensure fair use of technology by all partners within Mount Carmel RC High School.

All parties within Mount Carmel RC High School should follow this policy when using the ICT systems provided within school and outside of school to keep a high level of professionalism.

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## 1. Email and Digital Messaging Policy

*The proliferation of email traffic over the last few years has allowed us to communicate more efficiently and effectively. We are entering an even greater period of email use as students and parents now also have the ability to benefit from this form of communication. In order to ensure that all parties (staff, students and parents) continue to find email use effective and not too burdensome, we ask that the guidelines listed below are adhered to.*

### Email etiquette

- Try to decide if you are sending an email for the purposes of information giving, or for some other reason. Information giving is definitely the best use of email - but be careful with any other purpose, particularly any that involves emotion!
- Avoid using email for complaining or venting – this is not an appropriate use of the medium. Don't use email as an excuse to avoid personal contact. A simple 'rule of thumb' is to ask yourself if you would say what you have written directly to the person.
- Humour can also be easily misinterpreted, especially sarcasm. Try to avoid it unless you know the recipient very well.
- Try to keep the email as a whole brief, and to include a clear subject line as a header so people can identify swiftly whether or not it is relevant to them.
- Double check everything you write, as errors can be harder to spot at certain times of the day, when you are rushing or when you are occupied by other things.
- Check to whom you are sending the email before sending it. Bear in mind that the 'Reply to all' option should only be selected if you really need everyone on the distribution list to see your reply. This should be used sparingly.
- Please also think carefully before using the CC option. Only use it when necessary and in the understanding that it does not require a direct response but is for background information only.
- If you are writing about more than one subject, do so in separate emails to avoid confusion. Messages are more easily missed if embedded in a long, wide-ranging missive. The best approach is to re-read your email to check for clarity before you send it.
- Make sure that you are clear as to what the purpose of the email is. Do you require specific action, or is the email for information only?



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- If the email you are sending requires specific action you should ensure that it is sent a minimum of 24 hours\* (or 48 hours\* where substantive action is needed) in advance of any deadline so that the recipient(s) are given sufficient notice.  
\*Excludes weekends.
- Please note that defamatory or abusive emails should not be responded to. The receipt of such emails should be reported to your line manager.

## Staff email

### **To staff**

Why? Think carefully about whether you actually need to send that email, sometimes we are just shifting work from ourselves to others. Can the answer be found through some other means? Would waiting until you can speak in person actually be more effective?

When? **Staff should, where possible, avoid sending any emails after 7pm on weekdays and 5pm at the weekend.** Many of us choose to work beyond these times but it is very easy to save the email in draft form. (Just click 'cancel' and you will be given the option to 'save to draft'.) You can then send your drafts the next day. However we recognise that everyone has different working patterns so if you feel the need to send emails after the specified times, please consider that the recipients are not obliged to read or action the email until the next working day (excluding weekends). e.g. An email sent after 7pm Friday – Sunday will not be read until Monday, Tuesday therefore becomes the next working day.

Who? Avoid sending emails to staff members to whom it is not relevant. It is easy to set up email groups if you regularly send emails to specific groups of staff. **Please try not to use the 'All Staff' email unless it is absolutely necessary** - the noticeboard in the staffroom or staff briefing might be more appropriate. **When replying to emails please be careful not to select the 'REPLY ALL' option (unless necessary to do so)** but click the drop down arrow and select reply and add any intended recipients.

### **To students**

Why? Email is a great way to send resources to students and to collect work from them. Ensure that you are clear with your students about what constitutes appropriate email use, for example that formal language and protocols are adhered to. Avoid responding to straightforward student requests. It is important that students still come and speak to us if they have an issue and don't just fill up staff inboxes with simple questions.

When? Be careful not to email students outside the school day or when they are engaged in someone else's lesson. Again, this can be avoided by saving emails to draft and sending them when you have the students with you, before school or at lunch time, or when staff are free. This will avoid disturbing other teachers' lessons. It is possible to instruct students to go to general settings and toggle across the 'do not disturb' button in lessons. This will help pupils to stay focused if emails are accidentally sent to them at the wrong times.

Staff should ensure that they use students' school email addresses ONLY. The use of personal addresses would leave staff members extremely vulnerable. Therefore, for the protection of members of staff, pupils' personal email addresses MUST NOT be used.

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## **To parents**

It is important that, in most cases, staff do not email parents directly. The exception to this would be an occasion upon which parents require purely factual information. At such times, a factual email would be acceptable.

If a parent does send you an email, please ensure that you forward it either to your Curriculum Leader or Head of Year, who will respond accordingly. The Curriculum Leader or Head of Year should acknowledge receipt of the email immediately, and aim to respond fully to parental enquiries by phone or email within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Full contact details should be included so that parents know with whom they are communicating - particularly if out of normal school hours.

As far as possible, email communication with parents should be positive. If there is any sensitive information to share, communication should be undertaken either by phone or, preferably, face to face via a meeting organised specifically to address concerns.

Clearly, in addition to parents, members of staff often have cause to email a wide range of recipients. It must be ensured that all emails intended for external recipients are appropriately formal and professional in their content and tone.

## **Student to staff email**

Students should make sure that they use the school email addresses of staff members at all times, and NEVER their personal ones. They should also consider whether it is really necessary to be contacting staff in this way - would it be more appropriate to see them face to face at the next opportunity? Email should not be used as an excuse by pupils to avoid speaking to their teachers.

The best use of email is for simple, factual information - emailing staff is a privilege not to be abused, and should be treated as such. Students should ensure that basic rules of politeness are maintained.

Students must ensure that they include their name and form group on all communication. The easiest way to do this is to ensure that they have a clear 'signature' at the base of the email.

## **Parent to staff email**

When a concern or query arises, parents should communicate with the Curriculum Leader or Head of Year in the first instance either by telephone through the school office, or by using the 'Contact Us' page on the school website.

Parents are requested not to email members of staff directly even if their email addresses are known, unless there is a pre-agreed arrangement between the teacher and the parent. If parents are unsure as to how to direct a website message, they should contact the main office for assistance. Parents should include their child's name and form in the message, as well as the phone number upon which they wish to be contacted.

We request that parents refer all school-related matters back to the school, and do not approach other pupils or contact other parents directly about such issues. We are interested in working with parents to create solutions. Contacting other pupils or parents can complicate and even exacerbate problems, whereas referring a concern immediately to school will expedite a resolution. If parents have a complaint to make,

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they should contact the appropriate Curriculum Leader or Head of Department to discuss the best way in which to do this. The parent may be asked to put his or her concerns in writing. If so, an email to the appropriate person would be an efficient way in which to do this.

Due to the difficulties of arranging interviews with teachers during the timetabled teaching day, parents are requested to seek a mutually convenient meeting time with the staff member involved to discuss concerns. It is recommended that parents suggest two or three possible times at which they can be available and members of staff will reply at their earliest convenience.

## **Chain Mail**

Staff should avoid sending chain mails like jokes, funny images etc. The sending of such emails is highly inappropriate and unprofessional in the workplace.

## **Spam/Phishing Emails**

Any emails received asking you to 'Check your account' or 'Provide bank details' are more than likely malicious emails designed to gain access to your accounts or bank accounts, emails like this should be deleted immediately. **Do Not Click Any Hyperlinks.** If anybody is unsure please forward to the IT Manager/Technician and they will advise accordingly.

## **Email on Mobile Devices**

Where possible staff should refrain from having emails on mobile devices to minimise the risk of a data breach and to assist with having a healthy work/life balance.

If staff are to use email on mobile devices, email should only be used on a password protected device

Staff should only access emails via the official **Microsoft Outlook** app available on both android and google play.

**Staff are not permitted to have access to emails on their mobile devices if a device password is not set.**

If staff lose their mobile device containing school emails, whether personal or school owned device, staff **must** report this to the Data Protection office and Network Manager immediately, no later than 24 hours.

Mount Carmel RC High School reserve the right to remotely wipe ANY mobile device containing Work emails, for the purpose of preventing a data breach, for example a lost or stolen phone.

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## **2. Digital Storage and Data Retention Policy**

### **2a. Data Storage**

Information Technology and computers have become vital within the education sector over the past few years, and as the demand for technology increases, so does the need for larger data storage solutions.

Although we have adequate resources in place, staff should be mindful of how much storage they are consuming on the network as it is a finite resource shared across the school.

Staff should follow these rules along with the **ICT Acceptable Use Policy**

- Personal files with no relation to work such as photos, videos, movies, MP3's and other files are not permitted on the network. These can be stored on OneDrive for backup if required.
- Backups of Pendrives are not permitted on the network.
- Illegal or copyrighted materials must not be stored on the network.
- Staff should delete old files no longer required, especially Photos and Videos of past students
- Departmental Folders is for sharing of resources only, anyone can view these files and could potentially delete them. Staff should use their home areas for storing of work materials you don't wish to be shared.
- Confidential data should not be shared on Departmental folders, unless absolutely necessary and stored in a specific protected folder created by the IT Department
- At the end of each term, staff should delete any unwanted files they know they will not need again especially old work from past students who have now left.

### **2b. Digital Account/Data Retention and Deletion**

The following will set out how long we keep files and folders on the network before being deleted, for both staff and students.

#### **Students**

Retention Period: **6 Months**

Student accounts are disabled on the day of the final Year 11 exam and archived for roughly 6 months.



All files and folders relating to student accounts, including coursework, will be kept for up-to 6 months to allow time for ex-students to request their personal work or to allow a re-mark of coursework should evidence be needed.

## **Staff & Temporary staff**

Retention Period: **30 Days**

Staff accounts are suspended at 3:15pm on their final day of contracted work. After this time, access to emails, home area and shared resources will be restricted.

Files and folders in staff home areas will be deleted 30 days after termination of employment date.

Onedrive files will also be kept for 30 days, after this they will be deleted.

Staff should delete all files belonging to themselves before termination of employment.

Staff are permitted to keep files on Departmental folders after they leave, providing the files will assist Teaching & Learning and be used by current staff.

## **Emails Retention & Deletion**

Emails will be deleted automatically after 15 months (456 Days) from your mail box for both staff and students. This is to reduce the risk of a potential databreach and should be done anyway as 'good housekeeping'.

## **Monitoring & Filtering Data**

Retention Period: **60 Days**

We will keep records of all activities performed on school systems including webpages accessed, files accessed, keywords and general computer use DFE regulations and the prevent strategy.

This data may be passed to the headteacher or relevant authorities should anything suspicious be found.

All data will be kept for 60 days then removed from the system and will only be accessible by the Network Manager.

## **2c. Physical Data Destruction**

- All files and digital data contained on physical, data bearing media, should be destroyed via the correct channels to ensure full compliance with the data protection act.
- All CDs/DVDs/Floppy disks containing data should be passed to the Network Manager for proper disposal and destruction.



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- Old USB's containing data may be re-used but must be passed to the Network Manager to be thoroughly wiped and cleaned before re-using.
- All Waste IT Equipment including Computers, Laptops and tablets should be recycled in line with the WEEE directive and data destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- If staff members have any redundant IT equipment containing any data related to work, these should be passed to the Network Manager for secure data destruction this includes personal devices.
- A record of destroyed data will be kept alongside data destruction certificates for as long as the Data Protection Officer deems necessary.

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### **3. Remote Access Policy**

For staff with Internet access at home, it is possible for them to gain remote access to their school computer account in order to download / upload their personal files. The uploading / downloading of files is subject to the same rules imposed on staff whilst they are in school.

Access is also available to the departmental folders and staff can also access Sims.net for submitting reports etc

Access is not a right and may be withdrawn at any time, without prior notice and without reason. Any violation of the terms, as set out may result in the removal of your access outside of school.

#### **Terms of the Agreement**

When using any remote access tools staff are bound by the Staff Acceptable Use Policy alongside the rules below;

The uploading of any files not directly related to your schoolwork is strictly forbidden, as are files of the following nature:

- Any virus infected files;
- Executable files (e.g. computer software, self-extracting archives);
- Command execution files (e.g. JAVA scripts, batch files);
- Files containing any defamatory or unlawful text and/or images;
- Personal music files should not be stored on the system due to copyright issues.

No attempt will be made to interfere with the correct operation of the system and no attempt will be made to access anyone else's school account or attempt to deny anyone else access to their account (denial of service) by any means.

#### **Antivirus**

Any computer/terminal you wish to use whilst accessing the school's computer system must have an approved Anti-Virus package installed. If you do not currently have any Anti-Virus software installed, one must be installed before you will be granted remote access. Once installed, the software must be running at all times you are connected/communicating with the school's computer system.

You will undertake all reasonable measures to ensure your anti-virus software is kept up-to-date with the latest software updates and virus detection databases. The following packages are approved:

- Avira Free Antivirus (Free)



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- Symantec's Norton Anti-Virus
- Kaspersky
- Panda Free Antivirus
- Windows Defender (Windows 10) (Free)
- Microsoft Security Essentials (Free)

Sims access must be used by yourself and yourself only. Confidential data can be accessed from within Sims and this must be kept private at all times. You must not give your password out to anybody else. It is important to respect and adhere to Data Protection Laws when accessing sensitive data at home.

Under NO circumstances must you leave your computer/terminal unattended whilst accessing ICT services from outside of school.

By using Home Access Plus/Any Remote Access Tool you are aware that you are fully responsible for ALL actions carried out in and/or with your account.

## **Data Protection**

Any files containing sensitive information downloaded to your computer or laptop at home from the school network must be deleted from the device after re-uploading to the school network to avoid a potential breach (see step 4). For Example;

- User downloads File from Remote Access to Laptop
- User works on file and saves changes
- User uploads updated file to school network
- **User should delete old copy stored on Laptop**

A new remote access system is in the pipeline which will allow staff to remote directly into the school network with access to files, folders, office suite and SIMS to avoid the need to download any files to the local laptop or pc. Until this happens please follow the above guidelines.

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## 4. E-Safety Policy

E-Safety is a whole school responsibility which encompasses internet technologies and electronic communications such as mobile phones and wireless technology. It highlights the need to educate children and young people about the benefits and risks of using new technology and provides safeguards and awareness for users to enable them to control their online experiences.

The head teacher has the right to examine any school owned PC's, laptops, iPads or any other electronic devices and any software or applications held or run on any such devices.

E-Safety depends on effective practice at a number of levels:

- Responsible ICT use by all staff and students; encouraged by education and made explicit through published policies.
- Sound implementation of e-safety policy in both administration and curriculum, including secure school network design and use.
- Safe and secure broadband from **Schools Broadband Ltd** including the effective management of **Lightspeed Filter**.
- In house firewall for filtering and monitoring.
- National Education Network standards and specifications.

### Teaching and Learning

#### Why Internet use is important

- The Internet is an essential element in 21st century life for education, business and social interaction. The school has a duty to provide students with quality Internet access as part of their learning experience.
- Internet use is a part of the statutory curriculum and a necessary tool for staff and students.

#### Internet use will enhance learning

- The school internet access is designed expressly for students use and includes filtering appropriate to the age of students.
- Students will be taught what internet use is acceptable and what is not and given clear objectives for Internet use.
- Students will be educated in the effective use of the internet in research, including the skills of knowledge location, retrieval and evaluation

#### Students will be taught how to evaluate Internet content

- Staff and students must respect the copyright law 1988.

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- Students will be taught to be critically aware of the materials they read and shown how to validate information before accepting its accuracy as part of the Computing Curriculum.

## **Managing Internet Access**

### **Information system security**

The school's ICT systems capacity and security will be reviewed regularly.

Virus protection will be installed and updated automatically from a dedicated server.

Security strategies will be discussed with the Local Authority.

### **E-mail**

- Students may only use approved e-mail accounts on the school system.
- Students must immediately tell a teacher if they receive offensive e-mail.
- Students must not reveal personal details of themselves or others in e-mail communication, or arrange to meet anyone without specific permission.
- E-mail sent to an external organisation should be written carefully and authorised before sending, in the same way as a letter written on school headed paper.
- The forwarding of chain letters is not permitted.

### **Published content and the school website**

- The contact details on the website should be the school address, e-mail and telephone number. Staff or students personal information will not be published.
- The headteacher or nominee will take overall editorial responsibility and ensure that content is accurate and appropriate.
- Work can only be published with the permission of the students.

### **Social networking and personal publishing**

- School will block access to social networking sites.
- Newsgroups will be blocked unless a specific use is approved.
- Students will be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them or their location.

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- Students should be advised on security and encouraged to set passwords, deny access to unknown individuals and how to block unwanted communications.
- Students should be encouraged to invite known friends only and deny access to others.

## **Managing filtering**

- The school will work in partnership with the **Schools Broadband Ltd** to ensure systems to protect students are reviewed and improved.
- If staff or students discover an unsuitable site, it must be reported at once to the Network Manager for screening.
- The use of proxy sites will not be tolerated and any student discovered using these sites will be reported to Head of ICT for sanctions to be imposed.
- Senior staff will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate, effective and reasonable.

## **Managing videoconferencing**

- Video conferencing should use the educational broadband network.
- Students should not make or answer a video conference call without staff supervision.
- Video conferencing should be suitable for students age

## **Managing emerging technologies**

- Emerging technologies will be examined for educational benefit and a risk assessment will be carried out before use in school is allowed.
- Mobile phones should not be used in school. The sending of abusive or inappropriate text messages is forbidden.
- The use of mobile phones to take photographs or video footage of incidents i.e. fighting, bullying or happy slapping will not be tolerated.

## **Protecting personal data**

- Personal data will be recorded, processed, transferred and made available according to the Data Protection Act 2018.

## **Monitoring of network usage**

The school reserves the right to monitor and ensure transparency in the use of the school's information systems and Internet access. We may also exercise the right to intercept e-mail and to delete

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inappropriate materials where it believes unauthorised use of the school's information system may be taking place.

## **Policy Decisions**

### **Authorising Internet access**

- All staff must read the full '**Digital Communications Policy**' and sign the '**Staff Acceptable Use Policy**' before using any school ICT resource.
- ICT access, including internet access is given at the schools discretion and can be revoked at anytime.
- Students must apply for Internet access individually by agreeing to comply with the **Student ICT Policy**.
- Parents will be asked to sign and return a consent form.

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## 5. Mobile Phone and Personal Devices Policy

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity. Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:-

- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse
- Know how to minimise risk
- Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations
- Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use
- Are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours
- Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive.

An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users.

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office and/or via landlines located in each Faculty or by walkie-talkies where provided. If you are in a location where communication is not possible (e.g. fields, woods, astro) and you do not have a walkie-talkie then staff should carry mobile phones for emergency use only.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (eg in a drawer, handbag) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg classroom, corridor, playground).
- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- Staff must security protect access to their phone.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher and office staff aware of this so messages can be relayed promptly.



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- On weekends or holidays, when the office is not usually manned, they may have their phone available in case of needing to receive an emergency call. If possible the phone should still be on silent.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

## **Mobile Phones for work related purposes**

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities. However, staff should ensure that:-

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the School Mobiles Provided.
- Where possible, staff should not use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras, ipads or school phones. Where this is not possible, photos/videos should be transferred to the school network ASAP and the images deleted off your phone immediately.

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## 6. Social Networking Policy

### 1. PURPOSE

This Policy sets out the school's position regarding the use of social networking sites and other forms of social media. The aim of the document is to ensure that all employees are fully aware of the risks associated with using such sites and their responsibilities with regards to the safeguarding and protection of both children and themselves.

### 2. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all staff employed in delegated schools and those Teachers employed in Centrally Managed Services.

### 3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo, Twitter and MySpace has over recent years become the primary form of communication between friends and family. In addition there are many other sites which allow people to publish their own pictures, text and videos such as YouTube and Instagram.

3.2 It would not be reasonable to expect or instruct employees not to use these sites which, if used with caution, should have no impact whatsoever on their role in school. Indeed, appropriate use of some sites may also have professional benefits. For example many schools now use sites such as Facebook and Twitter as a means to enhance parental engagement.

3.3 It is now widely acknowledged that use of such sites does not provide a completely private platform for personal communications. Even when utilised sensibly and with caution employees are vulnerable to their personal details being exposed to a wider audience than they might otherwise have intended. One example of this is when photographs and comments are published by others without the employees consent or knowledge which may portray the employee in a manner which is not conducive to their role in school.

3.4 Difficulties arise when staff utilise these sites and they do not have the relevant knowledge or skills to ensure adequate security and privacy settings. In addition there are some cases when employees deliberately use these sites to communicate with and/or form inappropriate relationships with children and young people.

### 4. GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

4.1 Employees who choose to make use of social networking site/media should be advised as follows:-



- (i) That they should not access these sites for personal use during working hours;
- (ii) That they familiarise themselves with the site's 'privacy settings' in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended; Guidance on Social Media Privacy settings can be obtained from the E-safety Coordinator or Network Manager.
- (iii) That they do not conduct or portray themselves in a manner which may:-
  - bring the school into disrepute;
  - lead to valid parental complaints;
  - be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or it's employees;
  - be deemed as derogatory towards pupils and/or parents and carers;
  - bring into question their appropriateness to work with children and young people.
- (iv) That they do not form on-line 'friendships' or enter into communication with \*parents/carers and pupils as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised.
- (v) On-line friendships and communication with former pupils should be strongly discouraged particularly if the pupils are under the age of 18 years.

*(\*In some cases employees in schools/services are related to parents/carers and/or pupils or may have formed on-line friendships with them prior to them becoming parents/carers and/or pupils of the school/service. In these cases employees should be advised that the nature of such relationships has changed and that they need to be aware of the risks of continuing with this method of contact. They should be advised that such contact is contradictory to this Policy and as such they are potentially placing themselves at risk of formal action being taken under the school's Disciplinary Procedure.)*

4.2 Schools should not access social networking sites in order to 'vet' prospective employees. Such practice could potentially create an un-level playing field and lead to claims of discrimination if for example the selection panel were to discover a candidate held a protective characteristic as defined by the Equality Act.

## 5. SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

Communicating with both current and former pupils via social networking sites or via other non-school related mechanisms such as personal e-mails and text messaging can lead to employees being vulnerable to serious allegations concerning the safeguarding of children and young people.

The Department for Education document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practices for Adults Working with Children and Young people in Educational Settings (March 2009) states:-

<b>12. Communication with Pupils (including the Use of Technology)</b>	
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In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new technologies, pupils need opportunities to use and explore the digital world, using multiple devices from multiple locations. It is now recognised that that e-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself. Adults working in this area must therefore ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours. This means working to local and national guidelines on acceptable user policies. These detail the way in which new and emerging technologies may and may not be used and identify the sanctions for misuse. Learning Platforms are now widely established and clear agreement by all parties about acceptable and responsible use is essential.

Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of

Technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to pupils including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child young person outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also

*This means that schools/services should:*

- *have in place an Acceptable Use policy (AUP)*
- *continually self-review e.safety policies in the light of new and emerging technologies*
- *have a communication policy which specifies acceptable and permissible modes of communication*

*This means that adults should:*

- *ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and pupils are never listed as approved contacts*
- *never use or access social networking sites of pupils.*



includes communications through internet based web sites.

Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the School Email Policy.

Further information can be obtained from

<http://www.education.gov.uk/>

*- not give their personal contact details to pupils, including their mobile*

*telephone number*

*- only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by school/service to communicate with children,*

*making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used*

*- only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with any school/service*

*Policy - recognise that text messaging should*

*only be used as part of an agreed protocol and when other forms of communication are not possible not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person*

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That this policy document is shared with all staff who come into contact with children and young people, that it is retained in Staff Handbooks and that it is specifically referred to when inducting new members of staff into your school/service.
- (ii) That appropriate links are made to this document with your school/services Acceptable Use Policy
- (iii) That employees are encouraged to consider any guidance issued by their professional association/trade union concerning the use of social networking sites



# Mount Carmel

Roman Catholic High School

*A family of faith & learning*



(iv) That employees are informed that disciplinary action may be taken in relation to those members of staff who conduct themselves in a way which is contrary to the advice and guidance outlined in this Policy. If such conduct is deemed to amount to gross misconduct this may lead to dismissal.

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