



## Parent/Carer Digital User Policy

NGHS A007b

### The Purpose of the Policy

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy gives clarity to the way

in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Newall Green High School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four key areas:

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**
- B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity**
- C. Comments posted by parents/carers**
- D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

#### **A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**

The school's 'Digital User Policy' and the 'Acceptable Use of Digital Technology for Students' outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Both documents are available online.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook, Instagram and whatsapp to name a few examples. Students may only use personal devices **outside of lesson time**, when using personal devices in school outside of lesson times students must log on using the schools Bring Your Own Device WI-FI network. Students must abide by the Acceptable Use of Digital Technologies document when using such sites.

#### **B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 21).
- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' but where there is a strong link out of school then the head teacher must be advised of this.
- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
- Staff should keep the school and social media separate, including not identifying place of work on social media sites.
- If posting professionally school authorized accounts should be used.
- It is the responsibility of all staff members to report any misuse of social networking they become aware of to the Headteacher.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

**C. Comments posted by parents/carers**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, the school Facebook site and APP, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

Parents must not name students by tagging or making comments on sites used by the school.

Parents should make any complaints regarding school through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.

Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community or the school. School may take action against any parent making malicious or defamatory comments including reporting to the appropriate authorities and legal action.

**D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Headteacher or Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

The Governing Body understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings contravene the Prevent duty, have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- attempt to radicalise and recruit young people through extensive use of social media and the internet.
- expose (*an individual*) to hatred, ridicule or contempt.
- cause (*an individual*) to be shunned or avoided.
- lower (*an individual's*) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or;
- Disparage (*an individual in their*) business, trade, office or profession." (National Association of Headteachers)