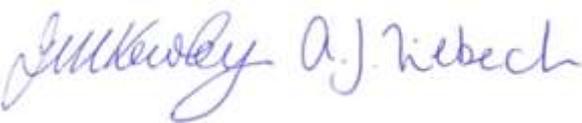# Bledington Primary School

Social Media Policy for Staff, Governors, Parents and all visitors to School.

Date of Ratification by FGB: 24.01.19 24.03.22 29.01.25	*Written 05.01.19* *Updated 24.02.22* *08.01.25*	Signed: CO-HEADTEACHERs

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding, Behaviour, Anti-bullying and Hate crime, SEN, E-safety, Equality, ICT acceptable use, Data protection and Mobile phone policies. All our policies are available at:

https://www.bledington.gloucs.sch.uk/policies/

Safeguarding Statement

At Bledington Primary School we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Bledington Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

Aim and purpose of the Social Media Policy

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people, including children. We recognize that social networking can bring many benefits, but there are also risks. The aim of our Social Media Policy is to keep everyone at school safe and within the law. It clarifies the way in which social media/mobile devices and computers are to be used by the Bledington Primary school community: pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and other volunteers or visitors. It will also provide guidance for parents. All members of the school community should bear in mind that information they share through social media and networks, even if it is on private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and UK libel and defamation laws.

There are five key areas:
A. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity
B. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
C. Comments posted by parents/carers
D. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education
E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

Policy Governance (Roles & Responsibilities)

All Staff and Governors

A. Use of social networking/computer games by staff in a personal capacity
Most staff will have their own social networking site accounts. However, the open nature of the internet means that social networking sites can leave professionals (such as teachers and other staff working in education) vulnerable if they fail to observe a few simple precautions. This policy is designed to protect the school community from potential harm or from becoming victims of radicalisation, extremism and malicious, upsetting or inadvisable contact. It is important for staff to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

- Staff **must not** identify themselves as employees of the school in their personal webspace apart from professional websites such as LinkedIn. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff.
- Staff **must not have social media contact with any pupils' parent/carers.** This is in-line with the NASUWT teachers' union and other unions which say that teachers should never under any circumstances accept Facebook (or similar) friend requests from parents/carer of a pupil.

- If staff need to communicate with parents/carers for work purposes they can only do so through the official school email or school phone. Personal email addresses/phone numbers **must not** be shared with parents/carers.
- Staff **must decline 'friend/following requests' from pupils or ex-pupils** they may receive in their personal social media accounts. If a request is received, the member of staff must notify the Headteacher and the parents of the pupil concerned.
- Staff **must not** use their own personal Twitter account to follow the schools Twitter accounts.
- Staff are recommended not to use their own personal Twitter account to retweet pictures from the school tweets.
- **Under no circumstances** should staff share or upload pupil photos online other than via the school's own website or school's social media accounts.
- Staff **must not** post comments or photographs/videos about the school., pupils, parents/carers, colleagues or images depicting any of these including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teachers' Standards.
- Staff **must ensure** that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the School.
- The school **does not permit** personal use of social media or the internet during core contracted work hours. Access to social media sites for personal reasons is not allowed on school premises. Staff are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties.
- **Caution** is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' on personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place. Staff **must not** use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame the school, pupils, their family members, colleagues, governors, other professionals or other organisations.
- Staff **are advised to set the privacy levels of their personal social media sites as strictly as they can** and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home address, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away. (Please see the 'Social networking – Guidelines for NASUWT members which sets out minimum recommended privacy settings for Facebook)
- Inappropriate use by staff will be referred to the Headteacher and may lead to disciplinary action.

The school's ICT Acceptable Use Agreement outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of the school or any illegal acts or acts that render the

school liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy.

All Pupils

B. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
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 register on sites such as Facebook and Instagram.
Other networking sites aimed at children should not be used/accessed in school, unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the objective of the relevant learning experience.

- Pupils **must not** send a 'friend/follow' request to members of staff.
- Pupils **must not** access social media on school devices, or on their own devices whilst on the school premises or school trip.
- Pupils **must not** make inappropriate comments (including in private messages) about the school, staff or other children.
- Pupils should be aware of how to report abuse and inappropriate content.

Parents, Carers, Volunteers and Visitors

C. Comments posted by Parents, Carers, Volunteers and Visitors

Parents, carers, volunteers and visitors are reminded of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the website, Group call texts, newsletters, 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/carers **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, as this may give rise to a safeguarding issue and put children at risk.
- Parents/carers **must not** use social media on their own devices while on school premises.
- Parents/carers **must not** access social media while helping on school visits.
- Parents/carers **must not** use or have their mobile phone visible on school premises or during school visits except in the case of an emergency.
- Parents/carers should raise queries, concerns and any complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents/carers **must not** post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

D. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education
All social media services must be approved by the Headteacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

If approved, the login details must be shared with the Headteacher and any changes to these must be updated with the Headteacher without delay.

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

All cases of online bullying by a pupil attending the school will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying and Hate Policy.

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

The Governing Body believes that there are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged. Furthermore, laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the internet and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- 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.
- Disparage an individual in their business, trade, office or profession.

The school can take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:
- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school.
- Poses a threat to a member of the school community.
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school or its employees/governors.

Where necessary, legal action will be taken by the school's governors and if appropriate the police will be involved.

Equal Opportunities for All

We do not discriminate against any pupil on the grounds of disability, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background in providing the curriculum, teaching and guidance, in applying standards of behaviour, dress or appearance.

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