



THE HERMITAGE SCHOOLS

Inspire, Learn, Achieve

Social Media Policy

Person Responsible:	Computing Leader & Behaviour and Welfare Leader
Date Adopted:	July 2013
Date of last review:	Summer Term 2024
Date of next review:	Summer Term 2025

Policy Links

- ICT Acceptable Use Policy for staff
- Rules for Responsible Internet Use for parents and pupils.
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- ICT Policy

Rationale

This policy is aimed at protecting both staff and pupils from the risks associated with the use of social networking sites.

The policy builds upon government guidance, to reflect the need to raise awareness of the safety issues associated with electronic communications as a whole.

It advises the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Governors on procedures which should be used when dealing with inappropriate or potentially inappropriate use of social networking sites.

This policy aims to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice and covers the use of social networking by all school stakeholders.

Aims

- To assist all staff working with children to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice.
- To set clear expectations, to both staff and children, of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use.
- To support safer working practice.
- To reduce incidences of positions of trust being abused or misused.
- To minimise the risk of allegations being made against adults who work with pupils.
- To give a clear message, to both staff and children, that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken.

Social Media

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in a variety of ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our personal and professional reputation, as well as the reputation of our schools.

We will strive to ensure that staff are kept fully aware of risks and issues that may arise through the use of social networking applications and ways in which these risks can be minimised.

Social Media Applications

These include but are not limited to:

- Blogging
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter/X
- Instant messaging services, for example WhatsApp

Terms of use

Staff should:

- Not use social networking applications in work time for personal use.
- Regularly review their social networking settings to ensure privacy settings are appropriate and that information available publicly is accurate and appropriate. This also includes photos that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school.
- Ensure that their profile/posts and any personal information is kept private to 'friends' where possible.
- Take extra precautions when posting online, including photos, comments and posts which could be misconstrued by others and reflect in an unprofessional manner on the individual or school.
- Not accept current or ex-pupils as 'friends' on any social networking sites.
- Ensure that if their communication is fully public (e.g. blogs, Twitter/X), that they maintain their professionalism at all times and remember that they are a representative of the school.
- Be aware that electronic texts can sometimes be misinterpreted or misconstrued, so should endeavour to minimise the possibility of this happening.
- Not use social media to discuss confidential information, discuss specific children or discuss the schools.
- Not use social media to post any photographs containing images of children from the schools.
- Not use social media to post any photographs containing staff from the schools without their explicit permission.
- Check with the Computing Leader if they need advice on checking their security settings or monitoring their online persona.
- Always inform the Executive Headteacher and/or the Designated Safeguarding Leader, if a pupil attempts to join a staff member's area on networking sites.

We do recognise that some staff members have friends within the local community, including parents, and ask that staff are extra vigilant if they are 'friends' with parents on social networking sites.

Pupils should:

- Not be signed up to any social networking site where members must be 13 years or over.

We do recognise that children may be signed up to social networking sites where the minimum age is 13 years, either with or without parental/carer knowledge. As a school we will monitor the use of social networking and ensure it is part of our online safety teaching. We will also endeavour to ensure that parents/carers are aware of how to minimise any risk to their children if they are using these sites, through meetings, newsletters and workshops. As a school, we reserve the right to contact sites such as Facebook and ask them to remove our children's accounts should any issues, such as cyber-bullying, occur.