Code of conduct for staff concerning the use of Facebook and all other Social Networking sites

We recognise many staff use Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites and that for some staff these sites are an integral part of their life outside work. For those of us working with young people, there are some inherent dangers in using these sites which as part of our safeguarding practices, need to be aware of.

This guidance is intended to help staff to become aware of best practice when using social websites and is designed to ensure all staff understand that neither the school nor workplace colleagues should be compromised by inappropriate comments or images.

The Local Authority guidance explains that staff who use Facebook or other social networks on a regular basis can place themselves in vulnerable situations with regard to personal and professional allegations, which could lead to a disciplinary investigation involving local authority safeguarding officials and the police.

The advice to all staff is that you should refrain from putting any photographs of yourself on your home page and make sure that your security settings within your accounts are set to maximum privacy.

It is a potential disciplinary offence should these guidelines not be adhered to.

Should any member of staff be unsure of how to interpret the E Safety and Acceptable ICT Use Policy, advice should be sought from the Principal.

1. Introduction

1.1 ACAS introduced specific guidance on the use of Social Media in January 2011 and the policy has been developed based on this guidance.

1.2 **The basic message is that everything shared on a social networking site could potentially end up in the worldwide public domain and be seen or used by someone you did not intend, even if it appears to be 'private' or is on a closed profile or group."**

1.3 The policy has been jointly agreed through consultation and negotiation with Trades Unions/Professional Associations. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently, understood by all users, taking full account of their effect on all areas of activity, satisfying legal requirements and contribute to a productive relationship between the employer, the workforce and their representatives.

1.4 **It is recognised that Social Media landscapes are likely to be misused and therefore extreme caution should be used at all times**.

2. Background

2.1 This policy can:

2.2 Help protect itself against liability for the actions of its workers (vicarious liability) vicarious means acting in place of another.

2.3 Comply with the law on discrimination (Equality Act 2010), data protection, copyright and protecting the health of employees. Please see footer entitled 'Legislation' at the beginning on the title page of the policy.

2.4 Help educate system users about their legal risks that they might inadvertently take.

2.5 Make clear to users who they should contact about any particular aspect of the policy.

2.6 Notify users of any privacy expectations in their communications.

2.7 Explains to all staff the importance of applying high standards of professionalism and behaviour to the social media conversations they have.

3. Purpose of Policy

3.1 The aim of policy is to help protect the Schools and employees against liability for the actions of its employees, and help employees draw a line between their private and professional lives by setting out rights, responsibilities and limitations which will help the School prevent any unauthorised comments which might result in creating a legal risk.

3.2 The Policy clarifies for staff the boundaries (the ground rules) and consequences of joining in personal use of social media networking (including business/professional related social networking), and ensures that such activities do not lead to misunderstandings resulting in complaints and grievances being made against them.

3.3 It is recognised, however, that many employers are integrating the use of social media tools into their business strategy. Social networking can be used internally to promote levels of employee

engagement and externally to help promote the organisation and reputation. Responsible use of Social Networking is actively encouraged.

3.4   The Policy establishes core standards of behaviour for the use of social networking tools centred around on-line conduct. Schools will expect employees to follow the accepted norms of behaviour when using these sites. For example if comments or pictures circulated within the staffroom would not be acceptable, or any other behaviour in a face to face workplace would be deemed inappropriate, it will be unacceptable "on line".

3.5   The policy should be included in all School Staff Induction Programmes. The policy is referred to in the contract of employment.

4.   Application

4.1   The policy applies to use of the internet and mobile technologies (such as smart phones/texting/internet and e mails/social network sites/blogging and tweeting) **whilst outside of the workplace both public and in-house.**

4.2   Examples of social media websites include (this is not an exhaustive list): Please see **Appendix 1** for definitions.

- social networking (e.g. www.facebook.com)
- video sharing (e.g. www.youtube.com)
- blogs (e.g. www.london2012.com/blog)
- micro-blogging (e.g. www.twitter.com)
- message boards (e.g. http://forums.moneysavingexpert.com)
- wikis (e.g. www.wikipedia.org)
- social bookmarking (e.g. www.delicious.com)

5.   Responsibilities

5.1   Everything written on social networking sites is in the public domain, even where privacy settings are set, or material is posted on a closed profile or group.

5.2   Employees must use internal mechanisms to voice concerns about issues relating to work generally, or their place of work or anything else related to work. Raising these issues outside the workplace may damage the reputation of the organisation.

5.3   As an employee you must

- not disclose personal details or identify your geographical location (by disabling access to your geo location to other users), including the publication of photographs where consent has not been given or where it can be reasonably assumed that consent would not be given.

- **choose online 'friends' carefully – this must NOT include pupils, recent pupils or parents/carers at any Wolverhampton Maintained School or Academy (on most services the sender wont be notified if you select ignore/not now or delete for such requests, nor if you have already accepted such a request will they be notified if you remove them from your friends list or followers .**

- ensure that privacy settings remain unchanged.

- not make references to places of work, school, publicise work or private - telephone numbers, addresses or e-mail addresses.

- not share private data relating to knowledge obtained through your employment with the School.

- not disclose any confidential information in relation to your employment.

- ensure that online activities do not interfere with your job, your colleagues or commitments to learners and their parents/carers.

- ensure that if you identify yourself as a school employee. You must ensure that your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, learners and their parents/carers.

- not subject your manager or other colleagues to any use of inappropriate or unwanted political or personal reference either in writing, videos, photographs, text messaging, posting blogs, or email that reveal some form of work related behaviour (known as Cyber bullying - to support deliberate and hostile attempts to hurt, upset or embarrass another person). In a case of Cyber bullying, Headteachers should refer to the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy for Local conditions of service for School based employees (teaching and non teaching) in schools.

- not compromise the school/employer and/or colleagues by making adverse, damaging or libellous comments, using social media to express views (negative or positive) with which the School would not wish to be connected, which are prejudicial to the best interests of the school and its employees.

- Be careful if using social networking sites to screen employees as you may run the risk of discriminating against candidates

- Employees who identify themselves as school employees will be required to use a disclaimer on any blogs, for example, stating that "all views are my own and do not necessarily reflect the official position of my employer".

6. School's Disciplinary Procedure local conditions of service for School based employees (teachers and non teachers).

6.1   Sanctions

Any breach of this policy will lead to an investigation being instigated in accordance with the Schools' Disciplinary Procedure local conditions of service for School based employees (teaching and non teaching) and formal action may be taken as a result .

7. Current Arrangements

7.1   In deciding how to respond to work related media usage whilst outside of the workplace both public and in-house, there are **three** sets of issues to consider:

7.2   **Legal** – please see footer entitled 'Legislation' applicable on the front page of this   document:

7.3   **Ethical** and **Practical issues**, including professional behavior in maintaining confidentiality, not making discriminatory comments and not sharing private information, during interaction

within the Social Media Landscape.

8.   Wolverhampton City Council's e- Strategy and e-Safety

8.1   This policy does not replace Wolverhampton City Council's published e Strategy in which schools take action at a whole school level to ensure that e-Safety is mainstreamed throughout the school's teaching, learning and other practices. The policy also does not supersede the '*Acceptable use*' policy which sets standards right across the organisation.

8.2   Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) works closely to co-ordinate approaches to e Safety with Wolverhampton City Council and external agencies – 'Acceptable Use of IT' is part of the required safeguarding suite of policies.

9.   Monitoring

9.1   Employers may have legitimate concerns about security that in some way justify a degree of monitoring whilst acknowledging the protection of employee's rights and privacy. Monitoring should only take place where it is needed to prevent specific illegal or defamatory acts and consideration should be given to any counter productive effects of the monitoring. Employee's must be fully aware of what the employers monitor, how they go about it and why they do so.

9.2   If it becomes apparent through monitoring or other means, that an individual has acted in a manner that conflicts with this policy, then the school should invoke the disciplinary procedure. According to the seriousness of the offence, this could result in action that may ultimately lead to dismissal. For certain offences, the individual may also be liable for prosecution under the Computer Misuse Act 1990 or the Data Protection Act 1998.

10.   Reporting and Review

10.1   Staff who wish to report a matter related to this policy should do so to the Headteacher in the first instance. Evidence of contravention of the policy must be provided, for example take a '*screen grab*' of the relevant page and try to identify the poster.

10.2   If the content is illegal (for example death threats) the police should be contacted. They have powers to request a service provider to disclose data about users.

10.3   Headteachers in the first instance should contact their Schools HR Consultant.

11.   Review of Policy

11.1   As technology is evolving so quickly ACAS recommends that this policy is reviewed annually, and more frequently as circumstances dictate.

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

The King's School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. There are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school, its staff, parents, carers and students.

Scope

This policy is subject to the school's Acceptable Use Agreements and;

- Applies to all staff and all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and students may use social media forums in their private lives. Personal communications which are likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with students are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Organisational Control

Roles & Responsibilities:

- **SLT**
    - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
    - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
    - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
    - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
    - Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
    - Approve account creation

- **Administrator / Moderator**
  - Create the account following SLT approval
  - Store account details, including passwords securely
  - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
  - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

- **Staff**
  - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
  - Attending appropriate training
  - Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
  - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a "Friends of the school" Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the School Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints concerning those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour

- The school requires that all users of social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.

- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media, staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant SLT member of staff, and escalated as appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites however, where excessive use is suspected and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.
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Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- The handling of offensive comments will be dealt with swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or a third party is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images
School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- **Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy**. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- **Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts**
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use
- **Staff**
  - Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
  - Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
  - Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
  - *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.*
- **Pupil/Students**
  - **Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.**
  - The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
  - Pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy
- **Parents/Carers**
  - **If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.**
  - The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
  - Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school
- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.
- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:
- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts
The Do's
- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts
- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them. *The school* recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by *the school*, its staff, parents, carers and children.

Scope

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The Don'ts

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- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Definitions of terms

Technology	Definition
Social networking - specifically Facebook	A social networking site for users 13 years or older. Users can create and customise their own profiles with photos, videos and personal information. By default (without applying specific privacy settings) anyone can search and browse anybody else's profile and write messages on their 'wall'. 'Walls' are basically a pubic conversation unless users have applied specific privacy settings. Private messages, however, can also be sent. The 'open' nature of Facebook can cause a variety of e-safety problems – inappropriate pictures added and visible (including pictures of the work place), other people 'tagging' pictures of a user without the user's consent, inappropriate comments added referencing work places and colleagues etc. Particularly concerning has been the recent trend of students or parents attempting to add school staff as 'friends'.
Video sharing eg Youtube	Video sharing websites eg YouTube are websites on which users can upload, share, view, download and comment on videos. Anyone can potentially add a video. In terms of e-safety, this presents risk on several levels. Often videos posted are inappropriate in terms of content. Often content infringes copyright. Comments posted are often inappropriate in terms of language.
Blog	A "blog" (a blend of the terms *web* and *log*) is a personal journal or diary published on the Web consisting of entries or "posts". "Posts" are usually displayed in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first. Blogs are usually the work of a single individual, occasionally of a small group, and often are themed on a single subject. Anyone can create a blog or a blog site – views expressed on such sites can often cause offence.
Microblog	"Microblogs" work on the same premise as "blogs" – however, the amount of words or characters a user can type is usually limited - users are able exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, individual images, or video links. Twitter is perhaps the best known example of a "Microblog".
Message board	A "message board" is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. Users usually post comments using a username or alias – as a result, messages are essentially anonymous. Content is usually monitored or moderated by an individual, although there may be a delay between inappropriate content being posted and removed.
Wiki	A "wiki" is a web site developed collaboratively by a 'community' of users, allowing any user to add and edit content. The views or definitions expressed on wiki sites are personal opinions and therefore may be biased or factually inaccurate.

Social bookmarking	"Social bookmarking" is the means by which Internet users can organise, store, manage, search and share bookmarks of resources online. Many online bookmark services have launched since the 90s – perhaps the best known example is Delicious. Unlike file sharing sites, the resources themselves aren't actually shared between users, simply the bookmarks that reference them. Descriptions of these resources are usually added to these bookmarks in the form of 'metadata' – basically information for other users.
Geo tagging	"Geo tagging" is the ability to add geographical or location data to media such as pictures, video, web sites, social networking 'wall' comments etc. This geographical information is usually added using the GPS facility within devices such as Smart phones. In its most simple terms, geo tagging can tell users exactly **where** a picture, video or 'wall' comment was taken or added. GPS systems can also allow a user to be pin-pointed geographically.