

Halstead CP School

Media Policy



Approved by the Full Governing Body
Signed :

Patricia M Dunmall (Chair of Governors)
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Mr Hawkins (Headteacher)

Media Policy

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Media Policy

The main aim of Halstead Community Primary School (HCPS) social media policy is to keep everyone within the school safe and within the law. HCPS recognises that many staff, governors, parents, carers use the internet for personal purposes and that they may participate in social networking on social media

Whilst staff, governors, parents and carers are free to use in internet in this way, they must make sure that they do not defame the school. The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of staff, governors, parents and using social network.

Social network

The school respects a member of staff's right to a private life. However; the school must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected.

The school expects all staff, governors, parents, carers and volunteers to:

- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school.
- Take care not to allow their interaction on social media to damage working Relationships.

Guidelines are issued to staff

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.

- Staff must **not** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts
- Notifying the parents if a child sends a friend request
- Using extreme caution when corresponding with parents via social media, and preferably using an email address instead
- Staff are strongly advised not to add "new" parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff must not post defamatory 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.

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- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Only posting things that they would be happy to be attributed to them as a teaching professional
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

Comments posted by governors/parents/carers

Governors, 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, 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.

Governors, parents and 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.
- Should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Dealing with incidents of inappropriate use of social networking sites

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, carers, the Governing Body will contact the parent / carer asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate .

The Governing Body understands 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 web 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 or

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- disparage (*an individual in their*) business, trade, office or profession.”
(National Association of Headteachers)
- If a parent is accused of making malicious comments about the school or a teacher on social media, the governors will advise that the parent / carer should be invited to a meeting with the school. If the parent has a reasonable complaint, this should be addressed through the usual complaints procedure. The school will always request that any inaccurate or offensive postings are removed. If necessary in an extreme case the school will take legal advice.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Staff, governors, parents and carers could also face criminal prosecution under the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

If necessary, action will be taken against any member of staff, governor, parent or carer who is found to have breached this Policy.