

# Sandbank and Valley Nursery Schools Federation

## Social Networking Policy



**September 2024**

# Social Networking Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The use of social media and social media and social networking sites is considered a strictly personal activity. The use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people, vulnerable adults and employees.
- 1.2 The DCSF guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults, who work with children and young people states that communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 All staff and students are safeguarded against allegations which may arise through inappropriate use of social media and networking sites.
- 2.2 The reputation of the school and staff is not adversely affected.
- 2.3 The school is not exposed to legal and governance risks.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 Social networking applications include but are not limited to:
  - Blogs for example 'Blogger'
  - On-line discussion forums such as 'Ning'
  - Collaborative spaces such as 'Wetpaint'
  - Media sharing service such as 'Youtube'
  - Micro-blogging applications such as 'Twitter'
- 3.2 Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of on-line presence such as virtual worlds.

## 4. Policy

- 4.1 Staff must not use on-line social networking sites such as Facebook / Twitter /Myspace etc. whilst at school.
- 4.2 Never engage in social networking with a student. All electronic communications with students should be done via the school email which can be regulated. To engage in social networking with students leaves staff vulnerable to accusation and speculation. Staff must take all steps necessary to safeguard themselves. Should you suspect that a student seeks an inappropriate relationship with you, you must bring this to the attention of your line manager immediately.
- 4.3 Staff are strongly advised not to enter into social networking with former students. Circumstances may lead staff to be vulnerable to accusation and speculation.
- 4.4 Be aware that by identifying yourself as a member of the school you become, to some extent, a representative of the school and everything you post has the potential to reflect on the school and its image. Therefore, should staff identify themselves as a school member they take on the responsibility for representing the school in a professional and positive manner. Defamatory statements about the school or colleagues can lead to disciplinary action or even lawsuits.
- 4.5 Staff should never name students or make reference to a student's personal circumstances. Safeguarding / child protection breaches can easily be made by the use of an innocent or thoughtless comment.
- 4.6 Staff should be aware that social networking sites have varying levels of security and as public sites all are vulnerable to breaches in security.
- 4.7 Attention is drawn to "Guidance for Safe-Working Practice for adults working with Children and young People", paragraphs 12 (Communication with children and Young people ~ including the Use of Technology) and 13 (Social Contact).  
This document can be accessed via the following link -  
<http://www.childrenengland.org.uk/upload/Guidance%20.pdf>