



SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Overview

This policy provides guidance to staff at Abbot's Lea School on the safe and productive use of social media channels to ensure that individuals benefit from these channels and avoid any associated risks.

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2008
- Employment Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010

We acknowledge that social networking has become part of everyday life with many people of all ages using social networking sites on a daily basis.

There are valid reasons for exploring the educational benefits of these sites, as research shows that the most discussed topics on these sites by young people are those dealing with homework and lessons.

However, school-based staff need to be aware that 'posting' anything on these social networking sites about themselves, others or their place of work must be prepared for the possibility that anyone could gain access to it, resulting in potential reputational or security risks.

School personnel should use social networking sites with careful consideration of the potential audience and the risks to their professional lives, the working-life of others and the work-place as a whole.

2. Aims

- To safeguard pupils, school personnel and governors from abuse through social media
- To safeguard the reputation of the school
- To ensure all school personnel are aware of the risks associated with using social networking sites
- To ensure that all school personnel do not jeopardise their professional careers, the working-lives others, or the safety of staff and students, through inappropriate use of social media
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy



- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to monitor and review this policy on a regular basis

3. Responsible use - personal/private social media accounts:

The following guidance is for all school personnel when using social media for personal purposes:

Recommended use:

- Personal social media accounts should be private, not public
- Consider using only your name for the profile and removing your occupation/professional title (unless it is fundamental to the channel – e.g. LinkedIn)
- Consider not putting your date of birth on the profile
- Be wary of what photographs you put online of yourself, family or friends
- When posting on social media, be mindful of the fact that even if your account is private, content can still 'get out' into the public domain

When using any social media accounts, staff should not:

- Place a child at risk
- Post confidential school information or information about any member of the school personnel on any social networking site
- Make reference to the school or anyone connected to it when using any social networking site
- Bring the school into disrepute by making any derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive comments on any social networking site
- Make discriminatory or offensive comments about any member of the school personnel, pupil, parents, governors or the wider community on any social networking site
- Make contact with parents or pupils via social networking websites
- Contribute or access any social media content which is illegal, discriminatory or otherwise offensive when linked in any way to the school
- Harass, bully or intimidate any pupil, parents, member of the school personnel, governor or any member of the local or wider community
- School personnel should not use the school's IT system to access social networking sites for their own personal use.

4. Social media use for professional purposes:

We believe Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are all useful tools for marketing the school by promoting and explaining our values, aims and work.

Official school social media accounts include:

Website: www.abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AbbotsLeaSchool



Twitter: twitter.com/AbbotsLeaSchool

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/abbot's-lea-school

Additionally, members of the Leadership Team may have professional accounts promoting their strategic and operational leadership function and the school as a whole in the variety of professional networks.

The purpose of school social media is to:

- Promote the school's work
- Network
- Inform stakeholders of school successes
- Inform or remind stakeholders of key school events
- Alert families and partners to any events affecting school's operation (i.e. central safeguarding notifications, emergency closure notifications, etc.)

The role of the school's Social Media Manager (Headteacher) is to:

- Update all accounts with the latest news and events
- monitor daily what is being said about the school online
- thank people about their positive comments
- answer any questions
- address negative comments
- remove abusive comments and if need be report these comments to the social media platform
- block any serious or repeat offenders on school's social media channels
- address or, if appropriate, refer genuine complaints to the Governing Body.

Appropriate use of school social media accounts:

All school personnel and other members of the school community are reminded that if they are an administrator of school social media platforms or are posting to the social media channel for the school, that messaging should be in-line with the aims and objectives of the channel and that they are mindful of legal legislation for social media use (e.g. posts must not be defamatory or malicious etc...)

Any staff member posting to the account should be aware that students and staff should not be 'tagged' into posts.

Any abusive comments made about staff, students, or school stakeholders on the official school channels should be reported to the school administration. Content will be investigated and appropriate action taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community.

All social media accounts for the school must adhere to the school's commitment to equality and diversity.



Appropriate use of professional social media accounts:

Members of the Leadership Team have professional accounts promoting their strategic and operational leadership function and the school as a whole in the variety of professional networks. These are professional social media accounts. As such, online interactions will include Abbot's Lea School content and any content relevant to the line of professional interests. Members of the Leadership Team will be permitted to post on behalf of their teams.

Other professionals working within the school may choose to set up their professional Twitter or LinkedIn account. Those may refer to their place of work but may not carry a school's logo or any official hallmarks.

Whilst the online interactions of those still fall under scrutiny with regards to appropriate content, there is recognition that the

5. Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy;
- appointed the Headteacher to be in charge of the school's website and the school's social media in order to promote the school;
- inform all members of the governing body that they must not:
 - post confidential school information or information about any member of the school personnel on any social networking site
 - make reference to the school or anyone connected to it when using any social networking site
 - bring the school into disrepute by making any derogatory, defamatory, discriminatory or offensive comments on any social networking site
 - make discriminatory or offensive comments about any member of the school personnel on any social networking site
 - make contact with parents or pupils via social networking websites.
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- provide guidance, support and training to all school personnel on this topic;



- periodically discuss social networking with all school personnel and respond to enquiries;
- regularly monitor the school website and the school's social networking website;
- take disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary policy if any employee breaches this policy;
- support all school personnel that are subjected to abusive comments made about them on social media by pupils or parents;
- report to the appropriate authorities any abusive comments made on social media to and about school personnel;
- explore the educational benefits of the use of social media;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;

Role of School Personnel

School personnel must:

- in line with the contract of employment, be aware of and comply with all aspects of this policy
- be aware that the Headteacher or the Governing Body will take the necessary disciplinary action if any member of the school personnel breaches this policy
- not access social networking sites on personal mobile devices or school IT systems during the working hours for their personal use
- report to the designated safeguarding lead any communication received from a pupil via social media
- report to the designated safeguarding lead any inappropriate communications involving any pupil in any social media
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination on social media
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community including any reputational damage to the school or any of its members as noted on any social media.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- staff email notification
- www.abbotsleaschool.co.uk
- meetings with staff

Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the Headteacher and the Governing Body.