



Policy on Parental use of Social Networking, Emailing and Internet Sites

Overview

This policy has been written with due regards for the Christian values that we are promoting within our schools.

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff. This document sets out this school's approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents have used such facilities inappropriately. When we have referred to "parent" in this document, we also include carers; relatives; or anyone associated with the School.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of the School from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what the School considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents;
- Set out the procedures the School will follow where it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the School, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the School; and
- Set out the action the School will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

Social Networking applications

The school acknowledges the potential of Facebook and other such social media sites as a means to provide information to school stakeholders including parents. Should a parent wish to create a social media site in the name of the school then permission from the Headteacher should always be sought in the first instance. The site creator/administrator must also ensure that the HT or another staff member is made a moderator of the site with full permission to delete any content that deemed inappropriate.

Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about the School and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the School recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking

accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. It is important to note that the school has a clear complaints policy and all concerns/complaints should be made to the school directly through the class teacher in the first instance.

As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the School, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the School:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would private and confidential discussions with the School be more appropriate? e.g. if there are serious allegations being made/concerns being raised. Social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people. Please contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified, particularly if the School has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the School; any detrimental harm that the School may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents (this includes Facebook and Twitter)

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the School (and those associated with it), it is totally inappropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the School, or using the School's formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

The School considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the School/cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the School/staff at the School;
- Making defamatory statements about the School or staff at the School;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at the School;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

Procedure the School will follow if inappropriate use continues:-

The School will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the School will usually discuss the matter with the parent to

try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information/Tweet/Facebook post be removed from the social networking site in question. The school may also decide, in its role as site administrators, to delete any information/Tweets or Facebook posts themselves if the content is deemed unacceptable. Please note that the school will not post a reason for the removal on the site(s) in question but parents are more than welcome to contact the school for an explanation.

If a parent refuses to remove a post, or continues to use social networking sites in a manner the School considers inappropriate, the School will consider taking the following action(s):

1. The school will take a snapshot of the post and keep it on file.
2. Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
3. Set out the School's concerns to you in writing, giving you a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
4. Contact the Police where the School feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
5. If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the School may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum; the person may be removed from our Facebook 'Friends of' page.
6. Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
7. Take other legal action against the individual eg libel.
8. The school can also refer to its vexatious parents policy in deciding what further action may be needed.

Emailing

We acknowledge that the ability to email the school is useful for parents to make staff aware of any issues or concerns that they may have. The school has numerous email accounts that parents may use to contact the school. The school has a specific email in order for parents inform the school about absences, additionally the school has an account for parents to contact the main school office and finally we have a specific email account for parents to contact the Headteacher. The three main email addresses are noted below:

- swyddfa@pantyrhedyn.conwy.sch.uk (PyR main office)swyddfa@babllanfairf.conwy.sch.uk (Bab main Office)
- pennaeth@pantyrhedyn.conwy.sch.uk (PyRh Headteacher)
pennaeth@babllanfairf.conwy.sch.uk (Bab Headteacher)

No teacher should be contacted directly by email on their personal email or social media account. Initial enquiries should be made through the swyddfa account and any messages will then be passed on to the teacher in question or to the Headteacher. The school will then contact parents in order to deal with the enquiry.

ADOPTED BY GOVERNORS JUNE16

REVIEW JUNE 18

Further review May 2019