

GUIDANCE/PROTECTION FOR PUPILS ON USING SOCIAL NETWORKING

**FOREST OAK SCHOOL
&
MERSTONE SCHOOL**



Reviewed: October 2015

Adopted by Governors: Autumn 2015

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out the key principles expected of all members of the school community at Forest Oak School and Merstone School with respect to the use of ICT-based technologies.
- Safeguard and protect the children and staff of Forest Oak School and Merstone School.
- Assist school staff working with children to work safely and responsibly with the Internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice.
- Set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to responsible use of the Internet for educational, personal or recreational use.
- Have clear structure to deal with online abuse such as cyber bullying which are cross referenced with other school policies.
- Ensure that all members of the school community are aware that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken.
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with students.

- No pupil under the age of 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and other social networking sites. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is:
Your home page/Help & Settings/Report problem
- All mobile phones must be handed into the Tutor at the beginning of the school day; the internet capability must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using a mobile phone. Pupils should not take photographs of other pupils on mobile phones or use them on social networking sites. 6th Form students can retain phone but not use it during lessons.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on the networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Principal. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of the day.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to your tutor/class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens. Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place using

electronic technology. This includes devices and equipment such as mobile phones, computers, tablets etc. as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages and chat websites. Examples include mean text messages or emails, rumours sent by email or posted on social networking sites and embarrassing photos, videos, websites or fake profiles.

- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

Cyber Bullying

- Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites
- Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.
- This can be a complex area and these examples might help:
 - A child is receiving taunts on social networking sites and texts from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.
 - A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using a social networking site. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school
 - A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using a social media. The pupils are in Year 5: This is the tricky one. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families as they attend the school. However, they are fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of social media outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the schools recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.

Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy.

If parent/carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment.

This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

Password Policy

- This school makes it clear that staff and pupils must always keep their password private, must not share it with others and must not leave it where others can find it.
- All staff have their own unique username and private passwords to access school systems. Staff are responsible for keeping their password private.
- We require staff to use **STRONG** passwords for access into our MIS system and pupils to be supported to also do this.
- Pupils to keep social networking passwords private for themselves and their families.

Sexting

The term 'sexting' is derived from texting and refers to the sending of sexually provocative material (including photos, videos and sexually explicit text) from modern communication devices or applications such as mobile phones, tablets, email, social networking sites and instant messaging services.

Legal Implications

The Commonwealth Crimes Legislation Amendments Act 2010 impacts upon sexting as a criminal offence. Persons over 18 years of age who transmit indecent material to persons under the age of 16 may face criminal charges. Sexting may well be an offence if the material is considered indecent according to the standards of ordinary people.

Sexting may also be considered a form of cyber bullying when nude or sexually suggestive images are uploaded and showed on the internet e.g. Facebook. This is especially the case when images are shared past the intended audience or when accompanied by nasty comments.

All staff members are required to notify the Principal/Designated Member of Staff immediately upon becoming aware that sexting images and if it is deemed to be of a serious nature, the police will be contacted.

Different Levels of Sexting

The following is adapted from Wolak and Finkelhor 'Sexting: a Typology'. March 2011

Aggravated Incidents involving criminal or abusive elements beyond the creation, sending or possession of youth-produced sexual images:

- **Adult Offenders** develop relationships with and seduce underage teenagers, in criminal sex offences even without the added element of youth-produced images. Victims may be family friends, relatives, community members of contacted via the Internet.
- **Youth Only: Intent to Harm** cases that
 - arise from interpersonal conflict such as break-ups and fights among friends
 - involve criminal or abusive conduct such as blackmail, threats or deception
 - involve criminal sexual; abuse or exploitation by juvenile offenders
- **Youth Only: Reckless Misuse** no intent to harm but images are taken or sent without the knowing or willing participation of the young person who is pictured. In these cases, pictures are taken or sent thoughtlessly or recklessly and a victim may have been harmed as a result, but the culpability appears somewhat less than in the malicious episodes.

Experimental incidents involve the creation and sending of youth-produced sexual images, with no adult involvement, no apparent intent to harm or reckless misuse:

- **Romantic episodes** in which young people in on-going relationships make images for themselves or each other, and images were not intended to be distributed beyond the pair.
- **Sexual Attention Seeking** in which images are made and sent between or among young people who were not known to be romantic partners, or where one youngster takes pictures and send them to many others or posts them online, presumably to draw sexual attention.
- **Other:** cases that do not appear to have aggravating elements, like adult involvement, malicious motives or reckless misuse, but also do not fit into the Romantic or Attention Seeking sub-types. These involve either young people who take pictures of themselves for themselves (no evidence of any sending or sharing or intent to do so) or pre-adolescent children (age 9 or younger) who did not appear to have sexual motives.

Sexting in Schools

Sexting Response Process for Professionals

This flowchart (adapted from 'Medway Local Authority Response Process for Professionals') will help the Designated Safeguarding Lead to make a decision about the next steps.

