Social Networking Policy

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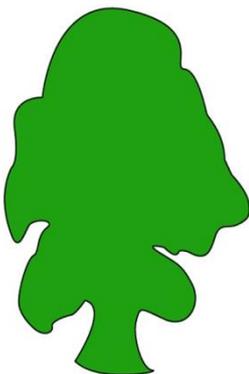# ELMHURST SCHOOL

Adopted: October 2016

Next Review Date: October 2019

Responsible Committee   Curriculum, Pupils & Community

Signed:

Headteacher: Mrs R. Lee

Chair of Governors: Mr D. Gamble

Social Networking Policy

Introduction
Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging or sharing photos (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace or Instagram and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image as well as the individuals in it. In addition, Elmhurst School has a strong commitment to safeguard both its staff and children. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff to adhere to.

Key Principles
All staff, governors and volunteers at Elmhurst School have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.

It is important to protect all staff, governors and volunteers at Elmhurst School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at Elmhurst School considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking. The only exception to this is the use of the school's social networking group which are updated by members of SLT to share current events within school and to promote the school in a positive light.

This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted and is blocked by the Bucks internet filtering policy.

Aims
- To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors and volunteers at Elmhurst School with respect to social networking.
- To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Code of Conduct for Staff, Governors and Volunteers of Elmhurst School

The following are not considered acceptable at Elmhurst:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The online posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The online posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

In addition, all staff, governors and volunteers must ensure that they:

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct
In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Appendix 1 contains a 'Useful Tips' section for more practical guidelines.

Appendix 1, Social Networking – Useful Tips to Protect Yourself

- Change your privacy settings on sites such as Facebook so people can't see your status updates or photos. Quite often parents can see your details because they may be 'friends of your friends', so have your security high. Remember to check these regularly as they can be updated.
- Upload photos carefully. Keep the more 'daring' photos that you wouldn't want Elmhurst parents/children to see private and not on public sites. If you're tagged in a photo, it can actually appear on a google search engine even if you've got your security settings set high.
- Private Message instead of tweeting or updating you public status. That way nothing gets out that may compromise you or the school.
- Avoid being online 'friends' with parents and maybe consider putting them on a limited profile so they can only see selected information (not photos, updates etc).
- Think before you post. When publishing information, personal contact details, video or images, ask yourself if you would feel comfortable about a current or prospective employer, colleague, pupil or parent, viewing your content.