Catholic Umbrella Trust

Social Media and Social Networking Policy

Revised St Marie's Jan 2015

E-Safety Coordinators	Date Approved	Implementation Date	Version Number	Review Date
Mr P Scott	St Wilfrids	April 2013	2	Ongoing
Mr A Truby	St Thomas			Yearly
Mr A Dewhurst	St Maries			Yearly
Mrs K Sadler	Consultant			

REQUIREMENT	ACTION
Who should be aware of the policy and where to access it?	**All staff and governors - Teachers Shared Drive, Policies, E-Safety, Admin Staff**
Who should understand the policy?	**All staff and governors**
Who should have a good working knowledge of the policy?	**Senior Leadership Team, E-Safety Team**
Whether the policy should be included in the general Induction Programme.	**Yes**
Where is the Policy available:	**Alongside the E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policies in shared work drive, Head Teachers and K Sadler**
Process for monitoring the effectiveness of this document	**Monitoring through reporting and incident logs and / or by E-Safety Team annually**
Training	**Staff Meetings, Inset Time, Induction training**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social Networking is a term used for the access of websites which allow people to interact and engage with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social networking involves the building of online networks and communities.

1.2 The main social networking websites include examples such as Facebook, Myspace, Bebo, Twitter and professional networks such as Linkedin. However, this policy covers all social networking tools including blogs, forums, podcasts, message boards, social book marking, Wikipedia sites and any other sites which involve document, photo or video sharing such as YouTube and various others.

1.3 We do not advise the use of social media sites when working in education. However, in implementing this policy, the Umbrella Trust Schools sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all employees in regard to use of social networking tools if employees do proceed to use social networking websites.

1.4 The access of social networking sites for personal use is prohibited from within The Umbrella Trust Schools; however, the intention of this policy is not to stop employees from using legitimate social networking sites in their personal time but to highlight areas in which problems can arise and the requirement for all employees to use social networking sites responsibly.

1.5 This policy and procedure applies to all employees irrespective of age, race, colour, religion, belief, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or marital status, carer status, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership. All employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner.

1.6 This policy applies equally to all staff employed by The Umbrella Trust Schools

1.7 This policy applies to current and future sites used for social networking regardless of whether they are specifically noted in this document.

2 LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

2.1 This policy has been written in line with the requirements set out in the Data Protection Act

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The E-Safety Team is responsible for providing advice on the Social Networking Policy and supporting its implementation throughout the school.

3.2 The E-Safety Team are responsible for reviewing the policy.

3.3 **Responsibilities of School Managers**

3.3.1 Managers should ensure that they adhere to the implementation and application of this policy and ensure that the policy is available for access by employees and that all employees understand their responsibilities.

3.3.2 Managers should ensure that any reports or information received regarding the inappropriate use of social networking sites is dealt with in line with the guidance set out in this policy.

3.4 **Responsibilities of Employees**

3.4.1 Employees should ensure they have read this policy and are aware of their responsibilities as an Umbrella Trust employee when using social networking sites.

3.4.2 Employees will have to sign that they have read and understood the policy when signing the schools Professional Code of Conduct Agreement.

4 USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES RESPONSIBLY

4.1 It is recognised that social networking sites provide a number of benefits which staff may wish to participate in their personal life. However, when an employee clearly identifies their association with The Umbrella Trust Schools, their profession and/or discusses their work they are expected to behave appropriately. This appropriateness will be judged in ways which are consistent with the Umbrella Trust School's values, policies and an individual's responsibility as an Umbrella Trust School's employee.

4.2 When using social networking sites, employees are also expected to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and any relevant codes of conduct set out for their profession.

4.3 Employees should be aware that our Umbrella Trust School, have a policy for raising concerns at work and this should be followed should any concerns arise. Using a social networking site to raise any concerns at work will not be considered as appropriate.

4.4 Employees must comply with the requirement to maintain child, parent, family and colleague confidentiality at all times. Any disclosure of confidential information through a social networking site will be considered as a breach of an employee's contract of employment and will additionally impact on any professional registration relevant to the employee.

4.5 Employees should not use social networking sites to inform professional practice by gaining information about a child or their family. In some circumstances and for some roles within our Umbrella Trust Schools this may be appropriate, however, there are strict guidelines and processes in relation to when this can be used which must be discussed with the appropriate manager. This should be discussed with the Head Teacher. **In these situations, advice should be sought from the relevant professional body and careful consideration should be applied in regard to professional boundaries and the impact on professional relationships.**

4.6 Employees who are found to breach the standards set out in this policy will be managed in line with the Umbrella Trust Schools Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

5   SOCIAL NETWORKING STANDARDS

Below sets out the standards expected of all Our Umbrella Trust Schools employees when using social networking sites:

5.1 DO

5.1.1   **Act responsibly at all times.** Even if you do not identify your profession or place of work, please be aware that your conduct online could jeopardise any professional registration and/or your employment.

5.1.2   **Protect your own privacy.** Think through what kinds of information you want to share online and with whom you want to share this information with. Adjust your privacy settings accordingly. Remember that the more personal information you share online, the more likely it is that something could have a negative impact on your employment. Think about managing your online friends by restricting what kind of information you give them access to.

5.1.3   **Remember everything is public.** Even with the highest level of privacy settings, once something is online it can be copied and redistributed and it is easy to lose control of the information. Work on the assumption that everything you post on line will be permanent and will be shared with others.

5.1.4   **Take appropriate action if you are the target of abuse online.** If you find yourself the target of bullying or abuse online then you can take action in dealing with this, such as blocking individuals from interacting with you and using the sites support mechanisms to report inappropriate activity. Our Umbrella Trust School's policy on Bullying and Harassment also sets out support mechanisms to deal with cyber bullying issues.

5.1.5   **Be considerate to your colleagues.** Pictures or information about colleagues should not be posted on social networking sites unless you have the agreement of the individual concerned. Always remove information about a colleague if they ask you to do so. Remember media can be tagged with details and/or location.

5.1.6   **Respect the privacy of others.** If photographs are taken at an Umbrella Trust Schools event then check whether those in attendance expect that any photos may appear on a public social networking site before posting. Remember it may not always be an appropriate way to share information whether work related or not.

5.1.7   **Update any online sources in a transparent manner.** In the course of work, employees may find errors or out of date information displayed through online encyclopaedias. If updating this information then you must be transparent about who you are and the capacity in which you are doing this. Employees should consult with the Head Teacher or E-Safety Coordinator before updating or amending any information about the Umbrella Trust School from an online source.

5.1.8   **Remember the benefits.** Used responsibly, social networking sites can be accessed to keep up to date with a number of professions and information. Many use Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin to update and communicate with members. Work blogs may also be useful for communication purposes but these must be agreed by the Head Teacher or E-Safety Coordinator.

5.2 DO NOT

5.2.1 **Share confidential information online.** In line with the Data Protection Act 1998 employees should not share any child or family identifiable information online or any personal information about colleagues. In addition to this, any confidential information about any of our Umbrella Trust Schools should not be revealed online.

5.2.2 **Build or pursue relationships with pupils.** Even if the pupil is no longer within your care, The Umbrella Trust do not deem this as appropriate behaviour. If you receive a request from a pupil then many sites allow you to ignore this request without the individual being informed to avoid any offence. If you are concerned about this in any circumstance, please discuss with your Head Teacher or E-Safety Coordinator.

5.2.3 **Use social networking sites to inform professional practice.** There are some circumstances/job roles where this may be appropriate however careful consideration and discussions with management should be applied.

5.2.4 **Discuss work related issue online.** This takes into account conversations about parents, children, colleagues or any thing else which may identify our Umbrella Trust School's online and bring into potential disrepute. Even if you think these conversations have been anonymised they are very likely to be deemed inappropriate.

5.2.5 **Post pictures of children/ their parents.** Never post pictures of parents or their children online even if they have asked you to do this. Employees should never take pictures of parents or children unless they are relevant and within the boundaries of the digital images policy. Permission from the subject and parents of children should always be obtained. *If your mobile phone has a camera then this should not be used in the workplace.*

5.2.6 **Raise concerns about your work.** Social networking sites should never be used for raising or escalating concerns at work. If you have concerns then these should be raised through discussing them with the Head Teacher.

5.2.7 **Engage in activities online which may bring the School into disrepute**. Think through what activities you take part in whilst online and what you do or say that may bring the Umbrella Trust Schools into disrepute. Any reports of this will be reviewed in line with their appropriateness.

5.2.8 Be abusive to or bully other colleagues. Social networking sites should not be used as a forum for abusive behaviour towards colleagues. *Cyber bullying and what it means is set out in the Schools Bullying and Harassment Policy*

5.2.9 **Post derogatory, defamatory or offensive comments about colleagues, the child, parents or families, your work or the Umbrella Trust School.** Everything posted on a social networking site should be deemed as open to the public and it is therefore unacceptable to use this as a forum for posting inappropriate comments.

5.2.10 **Staff are strongly advised not to build or pursue relationships with parents or families.** Even if the pupil of the parent or family is no longer within your care, The Umbrella Trust do not deem this as appropriate behaviour. If you receive a request from a parent then many sites allow you to ignore this request without the individual being informed to avoid any offence. If you are concerned about this in any circumstance, please discuss with your Head Teacher or E-Safety Coordinator.

5.2.11 All of the above applies to both open and private sections of any social networking site employees identify themselves with.

6   MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 The E-Safety Team will be responsible for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the social networking policy.

6.2 This policy will be reviewed every year or more frequently if required in line with any legislative or organisational changes.