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**Heathfields Infant & Wilnecote Junior Academy**

# Social Media Policy

## Document Control

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## Parental Use of Social Media at Heathfields Infant and Wilnecote Junior Academies

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram and other similar online forums are widely used and allow people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. The benefits of schools using social media is that it can increase communication between the home and school. Parents can keep up to date with what their children are learning at school or what they may have achieved during the day.

Unfortunately, such sites can be used inappropriately by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff.

We want to encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents but we have a duty to safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites.

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.

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 inappropriate to do so. Other channels such as a private and confidential discussion with the Head of School or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, a member of the Governing Body, or using the school's formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

### Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents

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

- Naming children or posting any comments about children who attend our schools;
- Making allegations about staff or anyone else connected with the school;
- Making any posts that could be deemed to be cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the school or staff at the school;
- Making defamatory statements about the school or staff at the school;
- Posting negative or offensive comments about staff or any other individual connected to the school;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence;
- Posting comments or engaging in online discussions with children other than their own;
- Posting photographs/ images of children other than their own without permission;
- 'Friending' members of staff.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking and other 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 their use of social media. Please note that most social networking sites require the user to be at least 14 years old.

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 to resolve it and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question.

If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the school considers inappropriate, the school will consider taking legal advice.

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 school may also contact the host/provider of the social networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information.

#### **[Linked Polices:](#)**

[Behaviour Policy](#)  
[Complaints Policy](#)