

CARDIFF HIGH SCHOOL



# Social Networking and Acceptable IT Use

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## Policy 2.9

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### SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ACCEPTABLE I.T. USE

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Social media are a range of web-based applications that allow people to create and exchange content. The popularity of social media has grown rapidly in recent years with widespread use of sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat and LinkedIn, as well as dating websites, blogs, emails, texting and instant messaging.
- 1.2 When used responsibly and appropriately, social media can offer you several benefits as an education practitioner, such as:
  - a) Building and maintaining professional relationships
  - b) Offering access to support networks, providing a means of discussing professional issues and sharing good practice
  - c) Providing access to professional learning opportunities and / or educational resources
- 1.3 However, there are also a number of dangers and pitfalls you need to be aware of when using social media. This policy aims to provide clear guidance relating to Cardiff High School's expectations of staff by highlighting how those dangers and pitfalls could affect you, and potentially your continued employment. For those staff registered with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) it can also affect your ability to continue practising.
- 1.4 All EWC registered practitioners are subject to the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice which sets out the key principles of good conduct and practice for registrants. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Code which can be downloaded from the EWC web site.

#### 2. Common Issues facing professionals

- 2.1 The way you use social media in your private life is a matter for your own personal judgment. However, you should still exercise caution in the content you upload to any social media site and consider whether it could compromise public confidence in the education workforce.
- 2.2 Using social media can blur the boundary between your private and professional life and these days all professions are subject to far greater public scrutiny making practitioners vulnerable to unintended misuse. It is

inevitable that people (learners, parents, public, prospective employers) will be curious about individual practitioners and may try to find out information about you.

2.3 It is therefore important you are cautious about which social media you use, and how and with whom you communicate.

2.4 Bear in mind:

- a) The standards expected of you do not change because you are communicating through social media
- b) E mail, texting, blogging and other social media communication encourages casual dialogue. Innocent comments or posts can be misconstrued or manipulated. The 'feel' can be different
- c) You can be vulnerable to unintended misuses
- d) Acknowledging, liking or sharing someone else's post can imply you endorse or support their point of view
- e) You can be mentioned / identifiable in inappropriate posts, sometimes without your knowledge or consent
- f) Your conduct online does not have to relate to learners in order for it to have a bearing on your fitness to practise
- g) Postings online are subject to the same laws of copyright and defamation as written /verbal communication
- h) Unwise behaviour online can result in criminal or civil action

2.5 Trade unions provide guidance to their members about the use of social media and this would be available via the union that you have joined. The trade unions are all consistent in the message about the importance of considering your presence on social media.

### **3. Privacy and Confidentiality**

3.1 Bear in mind the personal material you might intend only to share with friends or family could be accessible to a much wider audience, and that once uploaded to the web, it may not be possible to delete it or control how widely it is shared.

3.2 Some social media sites have privacy settings which allow users to control and put restrictions on who has access to their personal information, but the default settings on some sites may allow content to be shared beyond an individual's preferred, closed network of friends or family. It is therefore important you familiarise yourself with the privacy provisions of any social media site you use, and bear in mind the limitations of keeping information private online.

- 3.3 If you are unsure whether or not communication you post online could compromise your professionalism or reputation, think carefully about the appropriateness of posting it.
- 3.4 In particular, you should be aware that:
- a) Your personal information can easily be accessed by others. Social media sites cannot guarantee privacy regardless of what settings are in place
  - b) Once information is published online, your control of it is lost. It can be difficult to remove as other users may share or comment on it
  - c) Information uploaded anonymously can, in many cases, be traced back to its point of origin
  - d) Information about your location may be embedded within photographs and other content, and available for others to see
  - e) Although individual pieces of information may not breach confidentiality on their own, the sum of published information online can be enough to identify a learner or parent and consequently have potential for reputational damage to you, and possibly your employer

#### **4. Guidance for Personal Use**

- 4.1 If you have your own personal profile on a social media website, you should make sure that others cannot access any content, media or information from that profile that:
- a) You are not happy them to have access to; and
  - b) Which would undermine your position as a professional, trusted and responsible person.
- 4.2 As a basic rule, if you are not happy for others you work with to see particular comments, media or information simply do not post it in a public forum online. When using social media sites, all Cardiff High School staff members should consider the following:
- a) Changing the privacy settings on your profile so that only people you have accepted as friends can see your content
  - b) Reviewing who is on your 'friends list' on your personal profile. In most situations you should not accept friend requests on your personal profile from 'clients' you work with (This includes students, parents, former students, etc.)
  - c) Ensuring personal blogs have clear disclaimers that the views expressed by the author are theirs alone and do not represent the views of Cardiff High School. Make your writing clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Cardiff High School

- d) The appropriateness of photographs posted on personal profiles and any detrimental impact their content may have on individuals or the school
- e) Ensuring information published on the Internet complies with Cardiff High School confidentiality and data protection policies. Breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action which may result in termination of your contract
- f) Ensuring that you are always respectful to others including the school, staff members, students and their families and members of the local community

4.3 Staff should be aware that any disrespectful comments to the above might be seen as libellous and could result in disciplinary action or termination of your contract.

- a) Cardiff High School logos should not be used without consent
- b) At all times, in or out of working hours, you are an ambassador for Cardiff High School. Be aware that your actions captured via images, posts or comments online can reflect on the school

## **5. Use of Official Accounts**

5.1 Cardiff High School operates a number of accounts on social media websites for the promotion of activities and events, and as a communication method. The following outlines the limits of their use:

- a) An official account on any social media website may only be set-up with written consent from a line-manager
- b) Only authorised staff may use these accounts to post online and access to the account should be strictly limited. The school's Twitter and Facebook accounts are administered by the Senior Resource Technician
- c) Parents or children should not be referenced online without their express consent. This includes all photos, videos and other media
- d) Copyright laws must be respected, with references or sources cited appropriately
- e) Any employee who becomes aware of social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful should make their line manager aware as soon as possible. All staff using official accounts must adhere to the above guidelines; breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action or termination of contract

## 6. Use of IT Facilities in School

- 6.1 Staff and students at the school must adopt a common sense approach to the use of IT which must have an equal focus on courtesy towards other users as it does towards legal requirements.
- 6.2 The IT facilities at the school are intended to be used solely for educational purposes by the staff and students.
- 6.3 Users of the IT facilities must expect to face disciplinary action, exclusion and/or legal action if their use is deemed inconsiderate or inappropriate.
- 6.4 Listed below are acts that may be deemed as inconsiderate or inappropriate:
  - a) Use of the IT facilities to intimidate or offend
  - b) To access, send or download sexist/ racist/ defamatory/ obscene/ violent material using the school's IT facilities
  - c) To deliberately introduce viruses and/ or malware onto the school's network
  - d) To violate the privacy or other users or disrupt them using the school's IT facilities
  - e) To steal IT equipment, cause it wilful damage or use excessive force with it
  - f) To use the school's computers to conduct private business, advertising or to use it for political purposes
  - g) To attempt to repair or upgrade any of the IT equipment, without the consent of the Network Manager

**This is not intended to be an all-encompassing list, but rather an indication of the sort of acts that would lead to action taken under the Disciplinary Code and Procedures.**

- 6.5 In addition to adhering to this policy, all staff should be aware of the Cardiff Council School's and Lifelong Learning Services ICT Protocol of Schools. This may be accessed via the ICT folder within the curriculum area of the school's ICT network. When logging onto any of the computers on the school premises, users are agreeing to the terms and conditions laid out in this document.

N.B. Usernames and passwords are confidential and should not be shared with any other person. Any inappropriate acts carried out using a user account is the responsibility of the named user.

## **7. Managing Filtering**

7.1 Cardiff Council, through the Smoothwall software, will undertake monitoring of all content when accessing the internet and using devices within school. This monitors and alerts the Network Manager and Designated Teacher For Child Protection of any searches for key words deemed inappropriate; If staff or students discover an unsuitable site, it must be reported to the Network Manager or a member of the Leadership Team. The Network Manager will ensure that regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate and effective.

## **8. Communication**

- a) E safety rules will be posted in all networked rooms
- b) Staff and students will be informed that network and internet use will be routinely monitored and that internet traffic can be traced to the individual user.
- c) The Network Manager, who supports the filtering process, will have clear procedures for reporting concerns
- d) The Social Networking/ Acceptable IT Use Policy will be provided in a hard copy for all staff and will be stored on the Leadership Drive

## **9. Handling E-Safety Complaints**

9.1 Complaints of internet misuse will be dealt with by a member of the Leadership Team. Complaints of a child protection nature must be dealt with in accordance with Cardiff High School's Child Protection Policy.