

STAR ACADEMY SANDYFORD MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY



Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many youngsters. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits. This document gives clarity to the way in which social media are to be used by the academy community at Star Academy Sandyford.

There are 4 principal areas:-

- 1 The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
- 2 Comments posted by parents/carers.
- 4 Dealing with incidents of online bullying.

A The use of social networking sites by pupils within the academy

The Academy's responsible use of the internet/social networking policy makes it clear to pupils what use of social media is allowed. This states that 'Social network sites should never be accessed/used within the Academy. Members of staff **will not** be friends with any pupil or parent within the academy community via social media sites.

B Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of academy communication include the prospectus, the website, twitter, journals, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. Parents have signed both a home academy agreement and a responsible use of the internet form in their child's home academy journal.

- 1 Parents are not expected to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.
- 2 Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- 3 Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.
- 4 Parents should not post abusive comments that will damage the reputation of the school.

D Dealing with incidents of online bullying

The academy e-safety and/or anti-bullying policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear. The Department for Education's document 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' (page 5) indicates that the academy can take action against incidents

that happen outside school if it:

- 1 Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the academy or;
- 2 Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or;
- 3 Could adversely affect the reputation of the academy.

Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate would be covered by this irrespective of when/where the post was made.

E Dealing with abusive statements made by parents online

The academy will not tolerate parents, carers and visitors exhibiting behaviours including the following:-

- 1 Abusive or threatening emails or texts, voicemail/phone messages or other written communication.
- 2 Defamation of the academy or staff character on Facebook or other social networking sites.

If comments are made that are abusive and damage the reputation of the academy then the the academy will contact the social networking site to have these removed. If these comments are particularly abusive then the police will be informed.

This complies with the UK statute laws related to the use of IT which could apply in this situation. These are:-

- 1 The Protection from Harassment Act 1997: This states that it is unlawful to cause harassment, alarm or distress by 'a course of conduct'.
- 2 The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994: This defines a criminal offence of intentional harassment, which covers all forms, including sexual harassment.
- 3 The Malicious Communications Act 1998: this states that it is an offence to send an indecent, offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person (originally passed 1988; second impression 1998).
- 4 The Communications Act 2003: Under this Act a person is guilty of an offence if he/she sends by means of a public electronic communications network a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.

Additionally, if the comments are based on sexual, racial or religious grounds, prosecution could be sought through anti-discriminatory law.

N.Broomhall September 2016