St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation

For the good of all through curiosity, creativity and love

Policy Title:	**Social Networking Policy**
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Description:	Guidance on use of social media by staff
Status:	Approved by Governing Board
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Contact:	governors@stjohnandstnicolasschools.org.uk
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1.4				

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St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation
Social Networking Policy

At St John and St Nicolas Schools Federation, our vision is 'For the good of all – through curiosity, creativity and love.' This vision inspires everything that the federation does. It applies equally to all the federation's policies with the intention that our policies impact as fairly and positively as possible to meet the needs of all members of our schools' community.

1. **Introduction -** The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the appropriate use of social networking by federation staff. *Note: The governing board may wish to approve additional guidance after consultation with staff and relevant professional associations to meet the operational needs of the school.*

2. **Purpose -** The purpose of this policy is to guide the judgements of management and staff using social networking sites and the information that they provide through these by:

2.1 Advising management and staff to ensure that children are safeguarded.
2.2 Advising management and staff to ensure that the reputation of the schools is not adversely affected through use of social networking sites.
2.3 Ensuring that the federation is not subject to legal challenge as a result of employees using and providing information on social networking sites e.g. data protection, discrimination and other sensitive information.

School managers should make all staff aware of this policy and the expectations of staff conduct related to social networking. For new staff this should form part of their induction.

3. Social Networking Sites / Applications

3.1 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, SnapChat, Tik Tok, Instagram and YouTube.

4. Staff Conduct

4.1 The West Berkshire Model Code of Conduct for schools (paragraph 4.1) states "*In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, Governors, other*

bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff." This principle applies to the use of social networking sites.

4.2 The way in which federation staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the school and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents of the school. In their use of social networking sites, staff should be aware that that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.

4.3 It is recommended that staff take adequate precautions when using social networking sites/applications, both in vetting material that could be connected to them (through their own profile and information added about them) and through the use of appropriate security settings.

4.4 It is recommended that federation employees should not be "friends" with pupils on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue. It is acknowledged that there are some grey areas with regards to relations and family friends, but the principle of safeguarding is clear.

4.5 It is recommended that management and school staff do not identify the school on social networking sites as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the school.

4.6 The executive headteacher is available for staff to seek advice on their personal use of social networking sites and/or report concerns about the inappropriate use of a social networking site/application by another member of staff.

4.7 Where pupils behave inappropriately with staff this should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team and dealt with through the school's Behaviour policy.

4.8 The Model Disciplinary Rules state that the follow are examples of gross misconduct:

4.8.1 (paragraph 5.2) *Conduct that is a serious abuse of position – e.g. entering into a personal relationship with a pupil.*

4.8.2 (paragraph 5.10) *Criminal offences and other conduct outside employment could cause an employee's position at the school to become untenable particularly in circumstances where the conduct or offence is unacceptable to colleagues, management or parents or where the conduct or offence has the potential to affect the reputation of the school.*

4.8.3 (paragraph 5.11) *Making defamatory statements in the course of employment (e.g. making statements that are or could be slanderous or libellous) whether orally, written, or in electronic communication.*

4.9 Breach of these disciplinary rules in the section above (4.8) in relation to social networking or any inappropriate use of social networking sites and applications by staff will be dealt with through the School's Disciplinary Procedure.