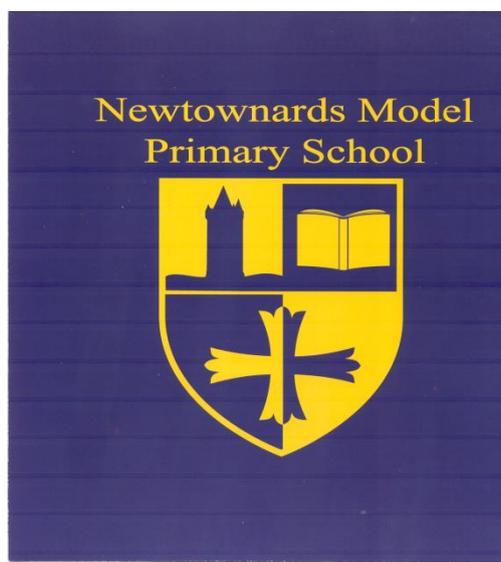


# Newtownards Model Primary School



## Social Networking Policy for Staff, Governors, Friends and Volunteers

### Introduction

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. In addition, Newtownards Model Primary School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

### Key Principles

Staff at Newtownards Model Primary School have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school community with professionalism and respect.

It is important to protect everyone at Newtownards Model Primary School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that all staff at Newtownards Model Primary School considers this and act responsibly if they are using social networking sites outside school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking. This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment or personal equipment is not permitted.

## Aims

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, Governors, Friends and Volunteers at Newtownards Model Primary School with respect to social networking.

To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

## **Code of Conduct for Staff at Newtownards Model Primary School– Social Networking**

The following are **not considered acceptable** at Newtownards Model Primary School:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Principal. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

## **In addition to the above, staff at Newtownards Model Primary School must ensure that they:**

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Never 'friend' a pupil onto their social networking site or make comments about a child in school, as these could be misinterpreted.
- Ensure that any social networking accounts used have suitable privacy settings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

## **Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

## **Cyber Harassment of Staff**

Newtownards Model Primary School defines Cyber Harassment as, 'the use of communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, defame or intimidate an individual.'

All employees are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the potential threat of Cyber Harassment. Employees are reminded of the potential risk from placing personal information on social networking sites.

If Cyber Harassment does occur, employees should not delete the content but keep records. Employees are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the harassing material.

Staff are encouraged to report issues of Cyber Harassment to the Principal. All such incidents will be taken seriously.

## **Cyber Harassment of Pupils.**

Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones or digital communication devices in school, unless permitted, in extreme circumstances by the Principal. This ensures that cyber harassment cannot occur during school hours.

If a pupil of Newtownards Model Primary School is the subject of cyber harassment by another pupil or an adult, outside school hours, these incidents need to be dealt with by the parents of the harassed child through various outside agencies. Newtownards Model Primary School has an obligation to educate children about the dangers of using the internet, acceptable use of the internet and how to keep safe when using the internet. However the school cannot be responsible for the social media interactions of individuals outside school hours.

## **Links with Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Code of Conduct Policy

ICT Policy

PDMU Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Behaviour for Learning Policy

Safeguarding Policy

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