



WESTCOUNTRY
SCHOOLS TRUST



We take pride in everything we do.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

| CONTENTS | PAGE |
|--|-------------|
| 1 Key principles | 2 |
| 2 Aims | 3 |
| 3 Code of conduct for stakeholders at the Trust | 3 |
| 4 Potential and actual breaches of the code of conduct | 3 |

1 KEY PRINCIPLES

All stake holders of WEST including staff, pupils, parents governors, volunteers external services providers and friends should ensure they conduct themselves, at all times, in such a way that serves to protect the reputation of the Trust, and treat colleagues, pupils and others associated with the Trust with professionalism and respect.

It is important to protect all stake holders of WEST from being the subject of inappropriate statements and comments placed on social networking sites. This could include statements referring to confidential issues, making false or vexatious allegations, derogatory, insulting or offensive remarks and threats or intimidating comments. The posting of such comments will be viewed as a potential breach of the school's policy and appropriate action taken. Where such actions are committed by employees of the school it may be viewed as misconduct or gross misconduct and steps may be taken in accordance with the school's agreed disciplinary policy.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that all stake holders of WEST considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking sites.

This policy relates to the use of social networking outside working hours. It should also be noted that other than in exceptional circumstances and where the prior approval of the Headteacher has been given the accessing of social networking sites during working hours either on personal or school equipment is not permitted.

2 AIMS

To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all stakeholders in the Trust including, staff, pupils, parents, governors, volunteers external service providers and friends at the Trust with respect to social networking.

To support the Trust Board and Local Advisory Boards overriding commitment to safeguard and protect children, staff and other stakeholders within the Trust.

3 CODE OF CONDUCT

The following are **not considered acceptable** within WEST:

The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without prior written permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including both electronic and paper communications.

The posting of any communication or images which links the Trust to any form of illegal activity or any other action which may damage the reputation of the Trust. 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 Trust.

The unauthorised posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

Making derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the Trust.

In addition to the above requirements, stakeholders are advised to use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, or the Trusts reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.

Stakeholders should also be aware of risks associated with on-line identity fraud and be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

4 POTENTIAL AND ACTUAL BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In instances where there has been a breach of the terms of this policy by an employee of the school, the following will apply:

Any breaches of this policy by an employee of the Trust 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. Depending on the circumstances a breach of this policy may be viewed as misconduct which could result in disciplinary action being taken or gross misconduct which may result in summary dismissal.

Any breach of this policy by a stakeholder who is not an employee of the Trust the Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the Trusts reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

