



Parental Use of Social Media Agreement

Overview

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools, pupils and their staff.

Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity to ensure their child is not viewing inappropriate content or using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to view or post online.

This document sets out our Nursery's approach to parental use of social media sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents have used such services inappropriately. When we have referred to 'parent' in this document, we also include carers, relatives or anyone associated with the Nursery.

Objectives

The purpose of this agreement is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the Nursery from the negative effects of social networking sites
- Safeguard the reputation of the Nursery from unwarranted abuse on the social networking sites
- Clarify what the Nursery considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents
- Set out the procedures the Nursery will follow where it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the Nursery, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the Nursery
- Set out the action the Nursery will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites

Appropriate use of Social Networking Sites by Parents

Social networking sites have the potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about the Nursery and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the Nursery recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts which they might use to discuss/share views about social issues with friends and acquaintances.

As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about the Nursery, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the Nursery:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would private and confidential discussions with the Nursery be more appropriate e.g. if there are serious allegations being made/concerns being raised. Social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people. Please contact the Nursery to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified, particularly if the Nursery has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint.
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the Nursery, any detrimental harm that the Nursery may suffer as a result of the posting, and the impact that such a posting may have on children's learning.

Inappropriate use of Social Networking Sites by Parents

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the Nursery (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the Nursery or using the Nursery's formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

The Nursery considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only)

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the Nursery/cyber bullying
- Making complaints about the Nursery/staff at the Nursery
- Making defamatory statements about the Nursery or staff at the Nursery
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific children/staff at the Nursery
- Posting racist comments
- Posting comments which threaten violence

Procedure the Nursery will follow if inappropriate use continues

The Nursery will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the Nursery will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the issue and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner that the Nursery considers inappropriate, the Nursery will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this
- Set out the Nursery's concerns to you in writing, giving you a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed
- Contact the police where the Nursery feels it appropriate. For example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a Nursery website or an online forum, the Nursery may take action to block or restrict that individuals access to that website or forum
- Contact the host/provider of the social networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information
- Consider removing the child from the Nursery roll. In cases where the inappropriate use continues legal advice will be taken to remove the child from the Nursery roll
- Take other legal action against the individual

I understand and agree to use social media sites in accordance with these expectations. I also am aware of the need to monitor my child's online activity.

Signed: _____

Date: _____