



.....putting Every Child Matters into Action

South Gloucestershire Council
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Headteacher: Mr D Brown

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Use of Social Media by pupils, families and staff.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Social networking is used everywhere and is a common feature of many people's lives. However if you want to say anything about your child's school or staff on social media there are a few simple guidelines we need to insist you follow, in order to keep all the children in school safe and to protect you from possible consequences of online actions. We already teach the children how to be safe online and you can reinforce this at home by showing your child(ren) how to communicate responsibly online, as we know many families do.

Part of our role as a school is to ensure that no confidential information about a child or family is unintentionally disclosed by a parent/carer or a member of staff. There have been several high profile cases in the news when people making offensive comments on social media have been prosecuted.

There are two parts to this brief guidance. The first part is about parent/carer responsibilities. The second is information about what staff are expected to do if they use social media, or come across information about the school (children, parents or staff) on social media.

Advice for supporting your child at home

It's good practice for apps and websites to have safety advice and well-designed safety features which can make a real difference to how safe your child will be when using them. Work through safety and privacy features on the apps that your child is using, or might use. Make sure they understand the point of these and how to use them.

Don't be put off by believing your child knows more than you: the tools are actually quite easy to manage.

- Ask them to show you which social media apps they use and what they like about them. Talk about how they use them and what makes them so engaging.
- Explain how you can use privacy settings to make sure only approved friends can see posts & images.
- Check if any of their apps have 'geo-location' enabled, sharing their location unintentionally.
- Show them how to report offensive comments or block people who upset them.
- Check 'tagging' settings so that when others are posting or sharing photos online, your child's identity is not revealed. Also, get people's consent before sharing photos.
- Encourage your child to come and talk to you if they see anything that upsets them.
- Children should not have access to Apps that you are unaware of, and avoid having children of a primary age being an Administrator in an app or aspect of social media site.
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Do remember that most social media sites in the UK require users to be at least 13 years of age before they can register, although some sites are created especially for children under 13 (see Internet Matters' Social networks made for children). <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media/>

Guidelines for Parents and Carers

- Never include children's full names (even your own children's).
- Never post or tag photographs etc without ensuring that you have the right permission.





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- If there is something you are concerned about in school please contact the school review it and take any action that may be needed rather than discussing it on Facebook for example, we can only know if you tell us!
- Everyone who adds to online sites is responsible for any comments posted under their name.
- At all times be respectful of others.
- If you are aware that sites are being misused you have a responsibility to report this.
- If an online conversation looks as if it might be derogatory you should not get involved in the discussion and refer the person to the school if this is appropriate.
- You should not accept children as friends on a social networking site.
- If you want to set up a site that refers to your child's school then please let the school know (such as a page for a class).
- If you are using social networking sites for school purposes remember that this is a school not personal area so personal comments should not be posted.
- Also if the site is representing the school then please make sure that the good name of the school and the people who attend that school is preserved and not brought into disrepute.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- No member of staff or volunteer is allowed to discuss any matter to do with pupils, staff or parents/carers through social media. This includes tagging photographs etc.
- Some members of staff or volunteers may have social network accounts as a parent or member of a local community group. They should avoid responding to any comments about the school they come across other than to correct factual inaccuracies (e.g. the time and date of parents' evenings).
- Staff and volunteers are obliged to inform the school leadership of any concerns they have about comments being made by others.
- Staff have a duty to monitor online spaces and report anything of concern to the school leadership.

The school will always request that any inaccurate or offensive postings are removed. If necessary in an extreme case, the school will take legal advice.

The DfE has issued specific guidance for parents about cyberbullying of children and adults since the above guidelines were written. The guidance is extremely helpful and well worth reading. You can download the guidance at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>

Thank you for your understanding and support.

D Brown
Headteacher

