

Social Networking Policy – March 2021



Policy approved by Head Teacher: Date:.....

Policy approved by Governing Body: (Chair) Date:

The date for the next policy review is



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Introduction

While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Ewloe Green staff, governors, non teaching staff and contractors (hereby collectively described as "staff members") are expected to follow when using social media. It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school and Flintshire County Council are safeguarded. Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

What Sites are included in the Social Networking Policy?

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following specific technologies: Personal blogs, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, MySpace Personal websites etc... The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.

Who should take Responsibility?

Any material presented on line including social media in reference to the School by any staff member is the responsibility of the poster. At no time should any posts be made in reference to any pupil, parents, governors, subcontractors, consultants, or any other professional that staff may come into contact with through work at the School. At no time must any photographs or material be published that identify the setting or children and pictures of staff may only be used with the express permission of the staff members concerned. Any member of staff found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality and or are deemed to be of a detrimental nature of the school or other staff or posting/publishing photographs of the setting, children or staff unless staff permission has been gained may face disciplinary action in line with the school's disciplinary policy and procedures.

What is the Legal Framework?

Ewloe Green is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the



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confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including: Human Rights Act 1998; Data Protection Act 1998 and common law duty of confidentiality. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998; Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality; Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information; Any organisational sensitive information such as information relating to proposals or current negotiations, and politically sensitive information. Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- ♣ Libel Act 1843
- ♣ Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- ♣ Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- ♣ Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- ♣ Malicious Communications Act 1998
- ♣ Communications Act 2003, and
- ♣ Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Ewloe Green and Flintshire County Council could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council liable to the injured party.

What are Ewloe Green's Principles?

Namely to be professional, responsible and respectful to all. You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school or County Council and your personal interests. You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council into disrepute. You must not represent your personal views as those of Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council on any social medium. You must not discuss personal



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information about pupils, Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council staff and other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media. You must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council. You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council.

Personal use of Social Media

Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council or service providers for the school or County Council in their personal webspace. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and the County Council and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services. Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil, whether from Ewloe Green or any other school, unless the pupils are family members. Ewloe Green does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way. Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity. Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils they receive in their personal social media accounts. On leaving Ewloe Green's service, staff members must not contact Ewloe Green pupils by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media. Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, County Council staff and other parties and school or County Council corporate information must not be discussed on their personal webspace. Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school or County Council uniforms or clothing with school Ewloe Green ICT or County Council logos or images identifying sensitive school or County Council premises (eg care homes, secure units) must not be published on personal webspace. School or County Council email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media. Staff members must not edit open access



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online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself. Ewloe Green logo or brand must not be used or published on personal webspace. Access to social media sites for personal reasons is not allowed during school hours. School computers and Internet must not be used for accessing social media sites for personal reasons at any time. Staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties and, in practice, personal use of the internet should not be on the school's time. Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place. Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

Using Social Media on behalf of Ewloe Green

Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another. There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with pupils or others. Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage. Official school sites must be created only according to the requirements specified in Appendix A of this Policy. Sites created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements. Staff members must, at all times, act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

What about Blogging?

Staff are warned that disciplinary action will be taken if they publish confidential or inappropriate information about the school or those linked to the school (including teachers, supply teachers, subcontractors, consultants, volunteers, pupils and parents) in any form of a blog. Time wasting during school/work time and through using the



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school's property in respect of updating or visiting blogs or other non-work-related websites may lead to disciplinary action. For further clarification, check with the Headteacher

Why is Social Networking now being monitored by the School?

Ewloe Green monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users. Users of Ewloe Green email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system. Key personnel in the school are trained in social media safety to aim to protect the school and the school community including staff, other professionals linked to the school, pupils/children, volunteers and parents/carers.

What if a breach of this Policy occurs?

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with Ewloe Green Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of Ewloe Green or Flintshire County Council or any illegal acts or acts that render the School or the County Council liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

