

## Coates Lane Primary School

### SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Governors)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Headteacher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Coates Lane Primary School recognises that many staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils use the internet for personal purposes and that they may participate in social networking on social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. In addition, staff, governors, parents and carers may set up personal weblogs or “blogs” on the internet.

Whilst staff, governors, parents and carers are free to use the internet in this way, they must ensure that they do not breach the law or disclose Coates Lane Primary School’s confidential information, breach copyright, defame the school, its staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils. They must not disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998 or Coates Lane’s E-Safety policy.

They should keep completely confidential, any information regarding the children, their families or other staff which is learned through the school.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of staff, governors, parents and carers setting up personal websites and blogs and using social networking websites.

This policy relates to material posted on public areas and those restricted to certain individuals.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINITION**

Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums (message boards), weblogs (blogs), microblogging (Twitter, Reddit), social networks (Facebook, Myspace, etc), podcasts, photographs or pictures, video and virtual game worlds (Moshi Monsters, Club Penguin, etc).

#### **WEBSITES AND BLOGS**

The following guidelines apply:

- Staff, governors, parents and carers must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or any third party that has disclosed information to the school.

- Staff, governors, parents and carers should not link any personal websites, social networking sites etc to the school's website.
- Staff, governors, parents and carers must not use the school website, internet systems, e-mail addresses or intranet for their weblog and staff must not write their weblog in employer time.
- If a member of staff, governor, parent or carer is asked to contribute to an official weblog connected to the school, then special rules will apply and they will be told in detail how to operate and what to write.
- Coates Lane Primary School will not tolerate criticisms through social media websites and blogs. If a member of staff feels aggrieved then they must follow the procedures outlined in the Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

The school respects a member of staff's right to a private life. However; the school must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. The school expects all staff, governors, parents and carers to:

- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school.
- Take care not to allow their interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between members of staff and clients of the school.

### **IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**

When writing a weblog and placing information on social networking sites, staff, governors, parents and carers should follow these guidelines:

- Do not include any information that breaches copyright and should link to other material rather than cutting and pasting it
- Do not defame (libel) anyone. A member of staff, governor, parent or carer who makes a defamatory statement that is published on the internet may be legally liable for any damage to the reputation of the individual concerned
- Include personal information about an individual without his/her consent, otherwise they risk breaching the Data Protection Act 1998, which is a criminal offence
- Include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist or that could be interpreted as harassment or bullying
- Bring Coates Lane Primary School into disrepute
- Staff should only access social media sites in their own time
- Staff should not comment on any posts made by others relating to the school
- Staff should not share or discuss matters relating to the school
- It is not advisable to invite parents/carers to become your friends on social networking sites. There may be a conflict of interest and security and privacy issues,

but where relationships are already established, staff should proceed with caution, being fully aware of the social media guidelines and the teacher's code of conduct

- Staff should not accept friend requests from Coates Lane pupils under any circumstances
- Staff should use the privacy settings available
- Staff should not share personal conversations
- Staff should behave respectfully and should not engage in topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory such as politics or religion

### **CYBER BULLYING**

Coates Lane Primary School is committed to ensuring that all of its staff, parents/carers and pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Cyber-bullying methods could include text messages, emails, phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to colleagues without their consent is also unacceptable. Staff, governors, parents and carers who cyber-bully could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

### **PERSONAL USE OF THE INTERNET**

Coates Lane Primary School does not allow personal use of the internet during session times.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

If necessary, action will be taken against any member of staff, governor, parent or carer who is found to have breached this Policy. Staff should also refer to the Disciplinary Policy.

### **SECURITY AND IDENTITY THEFT**

Staff, governors, parents and carers should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if they are part of a 'network'. Staff, governors, parents and carers should not assume that their entries on any website will remain private.

Staff, governors, parents and carers must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and, for example, favourite football team which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

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

- Staff Handbook
- Safeguarding Policy

- Home-school agreement
- E-safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Agreement