Social Networking Policy

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Social Networking Policy

Vision for Education and Smart Teachers acknowledge that social networking sites provide a number of benefits, but all professionals should be aware of the many challenges and potential difficulties associated with electronic communication and social media. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to all candidates whilst engaged in schools and alternative provision.

- Social networking sites should not be visited during the school day.
- Protect your mobile phone, laptop and computer with a PIN whilst in school to protect access to its content and potential misuse.
- Differentiate friends from professional connections by using access and privacy settings. Keep these under review and regularly audit and re-evaluate the information about you and who has access to it.
- Headteachers, parents, pupils and prospective employers may look you up on social media. Ask yourself if you would be comfortable about your content being viewed. If not, remove any dubious material.
- Do not engage in online activities that may bring yourself, the school or alternative provision, or the agency into disrepute. Derogatory, defamatory or offensive comments about pupils, parents and carers or colleagues must not be posted.
- Always maintain a professional tone online. Use of expletives, sexual content or any form of discrimination or harassment is always unacceptable.
- Do not create, or be involved in the creation or distribution, of any content that would be considered indecent, inappropriate and/or unsuitable to be associated with a professional working in a position of trust with children and young people, for example, creating/distributing content via sites such as OnlyFans.

- Do not allow pupils or parents and carers to make you their online ‘friend’ and do not instigate any befriending yourself. Parents and carers should be encouraged to use more formal channels to contact you.
- Do not exchange private texts, phone numbers, personal email addresses or photos of a personal nature with pupils or parents and carers.
- Do not allow others to tag you in photos without your permission – this needs to be agreed with your friends, especially on a night out.
- No confidential information about pupils, parents and carers or colleagues may be disclosed on social networking sites.
- Do not use networking sites to raise concerns about work or your colleagues – use the appropriate internal channels or call your Vision for Education or Smart Teachers’ consultant.
- If you do post your opinions online, make it clear that these are your personal views and not those of your agency by adding a statement to that effect.
- Respect copyright and fair use. Credit authors for their work and ask for the necessary permissions where appropriate.
- Contact your consultant if you come across any material that is likely to reflect badly on yourself, the school or Vision for Education or Smart Teachers.

For further information regarding cyberbullying and cybercrime, please refer to our **Safeguarding and Child Protection policy**.