



## Oasis Academy Pinewood Social Media Policy

### Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage the responsible, positive and constructive official use of social media in support of the school's and Oasis Community Learning's ethos, values, objectives, plans and reputation.
- Prevent and avoid damage to the reputation of the school caused by irresponsible or unauthorised use of social media.
- Remind employees, Hub Councillors and pupils of their personal responsibilities and accountability both in and out of school when using social media.
- Ensure responsibilities are understood so that all members of the school community are safeguarded from harm due to misuse of social media

### Definition of Social Media

"Social media" is the broad term given to describe internet and web based communication platforms, which enable users to rapidly connect and interact in a variety of different formats. A social media site is a platform that allows user-generated content to emerge through interactions and collaborations in a virtual community. This contrasts with earlier websites and other forms of broadcast media where users are limited to the passive viewing of content.

### Scope

This policy covers:

- Official use of social media on behalf of the School
- The responsibilities that Hub Councillors, employees and pupils have in their personal use of social media
- Comments posted by parents/carers
- Dealing with incidents of online bullying

### **Approved use of social media on behalf of the school (official use)**

All use of social media on behalf of the school (official use) must comply fully with this policy and all other relevant policies of the school and be approved in accordance with this policy. It must also comply with all relevant laws.

Users who have been approved in either of the ways below are referred to as “official users” and their use of social media as official users is called “official use”. Only official users may use social media on behalf of the school.

Only the principal, or in their absence their authorised deputy, may approve the official use of social media by employees. The principal may at any time revoke the official use of social media by any employee.

The principal is an official user unless their use has been revoked or suspended in accordance with this policy.

The school will maintain a written record of all official users together with a secure record of their user IDs and logon details. Official users are required to promptly notify the school of their account details used for official use and any updates to them.

The right to act as an official user will be terminated on the cessation of any employment or, for non-employees the termination of any appointment as a Hub Councillor. On termination, the official user will surrender all current login details and account information, including passwords and any other tokens or authorisation devices, to the school on termination and will assist the school as reasonably necessary to transfer or cancel the account.

The right to act as an official user is suspended during any period of suspension of an employee and the individual may not act as an official user during this time.

Official users must always follow any rules or guidance issued by the school when they act for the school.

Rules and guidance on how social media should be used by the school may be issued and updated by the leadership team at any time and will be communicated to official users.

### **Access to social media on school premises**

School equipment may only be used to access and post to social media by official users or as part of any approved curriculum activities. School equipment must not at any time be used for personal access to social media.

Employees may use any personal devices they own to access social media during any breaks provided this is done responsibly and away from the presence of pupils and ensures that pupils are protected from inappropriate content.



### **Personal use of social media by staff, hub councillors and pupils**

While this policy cannot cover independent supporters of the school such as parents and Pinewood Friends, they are encouraged to follow its principles.

Any staff member who is also an active member of Pinewood Friends must adhere to this policy in their own use of social media

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, for example on Facebook, Instagram, snapchat

### **Hub councillors, employees and pupils must:**

Remember that when you use social media you are personally responsible and liable for what you post. You must therefore take care to ensure that you always act responsibly and follow the law and the schools policies and standards of conduct whether you are in school or out.

Although the school will not do this as a matter of course, the school reserves the right to monitor and record your use of any social media if it is felt that you are using it inappropriately. If you misuse social media or post inappropriate or damaging content then you may be subject to disciplinary action including dismissal.

When using social media in a personal capacity (i.e. not as an official user) hub councillors, employees and pupils must always:

Follow any reasonable guidance that we issue including that in this policy;

Make it clear that your views are not those of the school and that you are not posting in any official capacity;

Take care to ensure that any general information you post that relates to the school is accurate and not misleading and promptly correct any errors or inaccuracies in your posts.

Be open about who you are and not post anonymously or under an alias in order to circumvent the requirements of this policy.

### **You must never:**

Disclose any personal information about members of the school community or disclose any information that is confidential to the school, including any information obtained as a result of your employment or position and not yet in the public domain.

Post anything or act in such a way as to bring damage to the school/Oasis Community Learning or their reputation.



**If you are a hub councillor or employee you must not:**

Knowingly “follow”, “friend” or engage in any way on social media with any minor who is, or was a pupil at the school unless that pupil is a member of your family, a relation or under your guardianship or you are following the individual solely as a consequence of fulfilling your parental or guardian responsibilities.

We ask and encourage hub councillors, employees, pupils and parents to report any damaging or negative comment about the school on social media to a member of the leadership team. Reports of any praise or positive comment are also welcome.

**Comments posted by parents/carers**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child. At Oasis Academy Pinewood, we believe in strong, supportive relationships and our actions as a whole community must reflect this.

Social media websites are not to be used for complaints and campaigns against schools. Oasis Academy Pinewood considers the use of social media websites in this way to be unacceptable and not in the best interests of the children or the whole school community.

Any concerns must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Principal/Deputy Principal or phase leader, so that they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

A defamatory statement is one which would tend to lower the subject in the estimation of people. In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren being educated at Oasis Academy Pinewood is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate ‘report abuse’ section of the network site. All social network site have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately. In serious cases, the school will consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. This may include reporting to the police.



### **Dealing with incidents of online bullying**

The school's anti-bullying policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any types of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the school will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the complaints policy.

The school understands that, 'There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist, homophobic or sexual element or where violence is threatened or encouraged.' Furthermore, 'Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- Expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- Cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- Lower (an individual's standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- Disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession.' (National Association of Headteachers)