

# ROTHWELL VICTORIA PRIMARY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

## Social Media Policy

June 2013

**Every Child Matters**

Enjoy and  
Achieve



Be Healthy

Be Safe

Rothwell Victoria Infant School



CARE SHARE

HELP SMILE

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Contents Page

<b>Aims and Objectives</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Scope</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Legislation</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Related Policies and Documents</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Data Protection and Monitoring</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Privacy Settings and Personal Information</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Acceptable Use of Social Media at Work</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Expected Standards of Conduct on Social Media Websites</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Use of Social Media during the Recruitment and Selection Process</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Inappropriate Conduct and Excessive Use</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Informed Consent</b>	<b>Page 9</b>

### **1. Aims and Objectives**

This policy aims to outline the responsibilities of employees when accessing social media either personally or using it for Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership purposes. It aims to manage organisational risks when social media is used for both business and personal use, and to ensure that its use is acceptable to avoid bringing the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership into disrepute. It aims to support the aims of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership policy on Safer Internet Use.

Social media is the term used to describe the online tools, websites and interactive media that enable users to network and interact with each other in various ways, through sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media involves

building online communities or networks, which encourage participation, dialogue and involvement.

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership recognises the value that social media can have to our business if used in a responsible and professional way. While it is recognised that employees are entitled to a private life, the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership is committed to maintaining confidentiality and professionalism at all times whilst also upholding its reputation by ensuring employees exhibit acceptable behaviours.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees employed by the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership. Our commitment to equality of opportunity also extends to applicants who apply to work in the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership.

Although this policy refers to employees throughout, the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership is aware of its wider responsibilities to provide a positive working environment for all who work on the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership premises. For the purposes of this policy employees shall also mean, contractors, agents and volunteers working for Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership on its premises.

Individuals are personally accountable for their behaviour and may be held responsible for any breaches of this policy. All individuals who work on Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership premises, including agency, contract workers and volunteers are therefore expected to support the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's policy on social media.

Although this policy applies to employees, employees should ensure that children are also to be reminded of their responsibilities in relation to the use of social media.

## **3. Legislation**

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership will adhere to its obligations under the legislation relevant to the use and monitoring of electronic communications, which are predominantly the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000; the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000; the Communications Act 2003; Data Protection Act 1998; the Human Rights Act 1998; the Defamation Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010 and any other laws and regulations in force from time to time.

#### **4. Related Policies and Documents**

Health & Safety Policy, Safer Internet Use, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Complaints Policy, Equality Objectives, Induction Policy, Photographic Images Policy, Standards for Teachers and Staff Handbook. Complaints Against Staff

#### **5. Data Protection and Monitoring**

Computers on the premises and any computers provided to employees for business purposes are the property of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership and are designed to assist in the performance of work duties. To ensure appropriate use of the internet, the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's internet software monitors all websites visited by employees for its business and security purposes. Therefore, employees should have no expectation of privacy when it comes to the sites they access from Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership computers and devices.

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership may exercise its rights to intercept internet access under the Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000 for the following business reasons:

- To establish the existence of facts relevant to the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's business
- To ascertain compliance with regulatory practices or procedures relevant to the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership
- To ensure that employees using the system are achieving the standards required
- To prevent or detect crime
- To investigate or detect the unauthorised use or abuse of the telecommunications systems, including using social media websites
- To ensure effective operation of systems, e.g. to detect computer viruses and to maintain an adequate level of security

To be able to exercise its rights, the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership must make all reasonable efforts to inform every person who may use the internet systems that monitoring may take place. The communication of this policy to all employees meets this requirement and employees are required to sign to confirm that they have read and understood this policy. This policy will be displayed on the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership Intranet home page.

## **6. Privacy Settings and Personal Information**

Default privacy settings for some social media websites allow some information to be shared beyond an individual's contacts. In such situations, the user of the site is personally responsible for adjusting the privacy settings for the account. Information available on social media sites could be produced as evidence by either the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership or an employee, should it be necessary either as part of Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership procedures or in legal proceedings.

Therefore, it is vital that employees and children are strongly encouraged to review their access and privacy settings for any social media sites to control, restrict and guard against who can access the information on those sites. Even if privacy and security settings are utilised, anything posted on social media sites may be made public by onward transmission.

Social media offers the ability to share personal information rapidly and easily. Employees should be aware of the expectation of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership that staff are to use protecting passwords on Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership equipment to reduce the risks of abuses such as identity theft.

To avoid identity theft, employees are advised to refrain from publishing any personal or sensitive information on social media websites, e.g. date of birth, home address, telephone number or any information related to personal bank accounts.

## **7. Acceptable Use of Social Media at Work**

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership IT Systems are first and foremost business tools, and as such personal usage of the systems is a privilege and not a right. Employees are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites where this is part of the normal duties of their work. [It is an important part of how the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership communicates and interacts with its employees/children/customers/clients].

Employees responsible for contributing to the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's social media activities should be aware at all times that they are representing the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership. Employees who use social media as part of their job should adhere to the content of this policy

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership accepts that employees may wish to use social media channels as a way of communicating personally with the public and/or friends; however its use at work should be restricted to the terms of this policy. Employees are permitted to make reasonable and appropriate use of

social media websites from the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's IT network at certain times. Employees should limit their use of social media to official rest breaks and/or when between appointments when travelling and/or times when they are not on duty (before and after work)].

Employees may wish to use their own personal devices, [including laptops, palm-tops, hand-held devices and smart phones] to access social media websites, while at work. Employees should limit their use of social media on their own personal equipment to their official rest breaks and/or when between appointments when travelling and/or times when they are not on duty (before and after work).

Personal use of social media should not interfere with employees' work duties and responsibilities. Inappropriate use of social media websites at work may be considered as a disciplinary matter.

## **8. Expected Standards of Conduct on Social Media Websites**

### **8.1 Appropriate conduct**

The line between public and private, professional and personal is not always clearly defined when using social media. If an employee identifies themselves as a member of staff at the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership, this has the potential to create perceptions about the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership to a range of external audiences and also among colleagues and children.

When communicating either in a professional or personal capacity, (personal and professional conduct is outlined for members of the teaching profession in the Standards for Teachers) within or outside the workplace, employees **must**

- Conduct themselves in accordance with other policies and procedures particularly when using Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership social media accounts to portray the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's activities, as this is an extension of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's infrastructure.
- Be professional, courteous and respectful as would be expected in any other situation.
- Think carefully about how and what activities are carried out on social media websites.
- Be transparent and honest. The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership will not tolerate employees making false representations. If employees express personal views, it should be made clear that the views do not represent or reflect the views of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership.
- Remove or request the removal of any inappropriate content such as comments, images or videos of themselves that they are aware of on social

media sites. Guidance on what amounts to inappropriate content may be found in 8.2 below.

## 8.2 Inappropriate Conduct

While using social media in any capacity, employees' actions can still damage the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's reputation.

When communicating either in a professional or personal capacity, within or outside the workplace, employees **must not** conduct themselves inappropriately. The following are examples of inappropriate conduct:

- Engaging in activities that have the potential to bring the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership into disrepute.
- Breach of confidentiality by disclosing privileged, sensitive and/or confidential information.
- Making comments that could be considered to be bullying, harassing or discriminatory against any individual.
- Posting remarks which may inadvertently cause offence and constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation.
- Posting or uploading inappropriate (defined as being proven to causing actual offence) comments, images, photographs and/or video clips about colleagues or ex-colleagues, children or ex-children, parents or clients.
- Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership, other employees or children.
- Engaging in discussions or anything which may contravene the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's equality and diversity policy and may have the potential to cause serious harm to the business.
- Use of offensive, derogatory or intimidating language which may damage working relationships.
- Blurring the boundaries of professional and personal life.
- Pursuing personal relationships with children, ex-children or parents.
- Participating in any activity which may compromise your position at the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership.
- Behaviour that would not be acceptable in line with the Standards for Teachers
- Knowingly accessing, viewing or downloading material which could cause offence to other people or may be illegal.
- Commenting on any work-related matters.
- Posting any material that breaches copyright legislation.
- Using a Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership email account to create a personal social media account.
- Doing anything that may conflict with the interests of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership.
- Using social media websites in any way which is deemed to be unlawful.

The above examples are not exhaustive or exclusive.

Employees will be held personally responsible for any material they personally publish on social media websites that compromise themselves, their colleagues and/or the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership.

### **8.3 Acceptance of Friends**

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership encourages the positive use of social media as part of the educational process. Social media is used by many people, particularly children to communicate with their peers and the public. Children may wish to form personal relationships with employees, however to ensure professional boundaries are maintained, employees **must not** accept and/or invite the following individuals to be 'friends' on personal social media accounts or other online services:

- children, including vulnerable children who are adults or children
- ex-children under the age of 18

**Please note that if employees choose to invite, or accept as friends, parents of pupils at the school they must be aware that any breach of confidentiality or sharing of personal information will lead to disciplinary action.**

Entering into such relationships may lead to abuse of an employee's position of trust and breach the standards of professional behaviour and conduct expected at the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership. The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership reserves the right to take disciplinary action if employees are found to be in breach of this policy, with the potential of dismissal for serious breaches.

Acts of a criminal nature or any safeguarding concerns may be referred to the police, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

## **9. Use of Social Media During the Recruitment and Selection Process**

The Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership will only view relevant social media websites as part of the pre-employment process, i.e. those aimed specifically at the professional market and used for networking and career development (e.g. LinkedIn). Any information that relates to applicants' protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will not be used as part of the recruitment and selection process.



## **10. Inappropriate Conduct and Excessive Use**

Any breach of this policy, including inappropriate conduct of the kind listed in section 7 above, or of a similar nature, will be dealt with in accordance with the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership disciplinary procedure.

Disciplinary action may be taken against employees in line with the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership disciplinary policy and may also result in the withdrawal of access to social media websites/ withdrawal of internet access. Persistent breaches of this policy may lead to dismissal. Serious cases may be treated as gross misconduct, which may result in summary dismissal.

## **11. Responsibilities**

The Governing Body has responsibility for drafting, updating, monitoring and reviewing this policy. It will be reviewed annually.

All employees are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and for reporting any breaches of the policy to the Deputy Headteacher or the Executive Headteacher.

If employees have concerns about information or conduct on social media sites that are inappropriate, offensive, demeaning or could be seen to be bullying, this should be reported to the Deputy Headteacher or the Executive Headteacher immediately.

## **12. Informed Consent**

All employees are required to sign a form (with the wording as outlined below) to confirm that they have read and understood this policy and agree to comply with its requirements.

*I [employee full name] have read and understood the contents of the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership's Social Media Policy and will comply with its requirements during my employment with the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership. I am fully aware of and accept that the Rothwell Victoria Primary Learning Partnership reserves the right, in accordance with this Policy, to monitor internet usage and take appropriate action for non-compliance of this policy.*

Employee signature:

Date: