

THE WESTGATE SCHOOL

Hampshire's First 4-16 'All Through' School

*"The Westgate School is a community of learners where partnerships inspire success for all:
learning together – achieving excellence"*

Headteacher: Mrs F A Dean, MA (Ed)

Initial Policy date	November 2018	Next scheduled review	September 2024
Governor approved	September 2023	Key person/people	HT/DHTS
Model Policy		Model localised	Yes
Pupil leadership team review	N/A	Rotherly Day Nursery variations in policy	Yes / No

SOCIAL MEDIA and ONLINE COMMUNICATION POLICY

Principles:

There are significant benefits for communication, engagement, collaboration and learning via the internet and social media however, alongside this there are risks associated with users such as employees, pupils and the wider School community (Online Safety Policy and Guidance – Hampshire County Council). It is, therefore, important that we use the following policy to ensure all members of our community are safeguarded and the accounts are used appropriately.

- i. The Malicious Communications Act 1998 states that it is an offence to send another person a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys: a message which is indecent or grossly offensive; a threat; or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. The communications listed are offences if, and only if, the intent of the sender is to cause distress or anxiety.
- ii. Section 1 of the Defamation Act 2013 says that an individual is guilty of an offence where he/she publishes a statement that causes, or is likely to cause, serious harm to the reputation of the claimant.
- iii. Employees, pupils and parents/carers have the right to be protected from Cyberbullying which includes: making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in online forums and, the use of mobile telephone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation and, posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (HCC Safeguarding Policy, 2019).
- iv. The Protection from harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- v. The General Data Protection Regulation 2018 will be observed regarding the use of identifiable information in accordance with our Data Protection policy.
- vi. On-line safety categorised into content, contact, conduct and commerce (4 c's) in line with KCSIE recommendation for whole school approach (section 124, p.33).

The bullying of employees is always unacceptable, including that which takes place on online forums; this includes the posting of derogatory comments about employees or the School (as

well as pupils, parents and carers) which is considered to be a form of Cyberbullying (DfE: 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff, 2014).

Practice:

- i. The School's social media accounts should be used appropriately, in line with the School ethos and values, by all partners, in order to celebrate our community.
- ii. Photos and information will be posted by employees via the School office. Photos of pupils will be crosschecked to ensure that usage is in compliance with the School Data Protection Policy and that Parents/Carers have given permission for their child's photo to be used for School publicity purposes.
- iii. If any person would like to discuss a matter then they should on an individual basis contact the School office or appropriate colleague as per the School website, in order to resolve the situation. Parents/carers are asked to avoid using social media forums and groups such as WhatsApp to air grievances as the subject of the complaint cannot easily defend themselves and is therefore a potential victim of cyberbullying (Home-School Agreement).
- iv. If a person uses an account contrary to the School's ethos and values, the School and individual reserves the right to take one or more of the following actions:
 - (If a pupil) a colleague will speak to them and contact parents.
 - 'Block' said person from accessing the account or sending emails.
 - Contact the person in order to resolve the situation.
 - School colleagues may report content to the relevant social media platform using the designated reporting channels for each application.
 - Pass the details to the police.
 - Inform the School's legal services.
 - Employees may seek legal action against the alleged perpetrator
 - The School may apply Annexe A of the School's 'Complaints Policy' for dealing with harassment or aggression.
- v. This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including the School's Antibullying Policy, Behaviour and Exclusions and Safeguarding Policy.

Rotherly Day Nursery variations: no specific variation to policy needed.

ARE YOU THE VICTIM OF MALICIOUS COMMUNICATION?

A SELF-HELP GUIDE



Malicious communication relates to the sending of indecent, offensive or threatening letters, electronic communication or articles with the intent to cause the recipient distress or anxiety.

If you are a victim of malicious communication there are steps you can take to stop the behaviour of the other person. These are detailed below.



OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR VIA ELECTRONIC & WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

MAY INCLUDE BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

COMMUNICATION METHOD	+	THE CONTENT	=	A CRIME
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content grossly offensive, vulgar, outrageous, shameful, shocking, abusive, insulting That is indecent, degrading, humiliating, improper, especially in relation to sexual matters That is of a threatening nature and the threat is believed to be real That is sent using false information that is believed to be false by the sender Sent to cause the person or anyone else distress or anxiety 		

ADVICE

- Ask the offender to STOP and then do not communicate any further
- Do NOT delete correspondence - keep copies of conversations by saving emails or taking screenshots
- REPORT any threatening, offensive or indecent content to the host website/platform
- BLOCK or unfriend those making unwanted contact - refer to host website/platform or Get Safe Online link below for assistance
- Do NOT retaliate – arguments will only continue and make it hard to determine who is at fault
- Seek SUPPORT from agencies such as Victim Support or the Samaritans if you need to talk about the impact the situation is having on your life

FURTHER SUPPORT

Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org
 Samaritans: www.samaritans.org
 Get Safe Online: www.getsafeonline.org