

# Avalon School Staff Social Networking Policy

## September 2015

\*In the context of this policy “everyone” refers to members of staff, trustees, friends and anyone working in a voluntary capacity at the school

### Introduction

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Flickr or Twitter and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. In addition, Avalon School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

### Key Principles

- o Everyone\* at Avalon School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.
- o It is important to protect everyone\* at Avalon School from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- o Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone\* at Avalon School considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with Avalon School students via social networking and must not accept or initiate Facebook friend requests (or friend/follow requests on other social media networks) from students enrolled, or previously enrolled, at Avalon School.
- o This policy relates to social networking outside work.

### Aims

- o To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, trustees, friends and volunteers at Avalon School with respect to social networking.
- o To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

### Code of Conduct for Everyone Avalon School – Social Networking

The following are **not considered acceptable** at Avalon School:

- o The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the School Management

Laura Rutherford - DH - Esafety Lead

Team. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.

- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any information or images of employees, children, trustees or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities except by a designated person for agreed publicity use.
- To post or comment on specific, individual matters or events related to the school and its member of its community on any social media accounts.

**In addition to the above everyone\* at Avalon School must ensure that they:**

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal or professional reputation, or the school's reputation, is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.
- Communication between pupils and adults should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries
- All communications are transparent and open to scrutiny
- Should not share personal information with a child or young person
- Personal contact details including email, home or mobile numbers should not be given.
- Ensure that personal social networking sites privacy settings are set to the highest possible levels and pupils are never listed as approved contacts.
- Never use or access social networking sites of pupils.
- Not use internal or web based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person.
- It is strongly recommended that Facebook friend requests not be initiated to or accepted from parents.
- Any communications received from pupils enrolled, or their parents, on any personal social media sites must be reported to child protection lead.

Volunteers, Governors or staff who are parents or carer of Avalon pupils may support or oversee their child's social media and social

Laura Rutherford - DH - Esafety Lead

communications (including text, messaging apps and email) with other Avalon pupils.

**Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.
- The Trustees will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, trustees, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

<b>Date agreed by governors:</b>	<b>Signed by Chair:</b>
----------------------------------	-------------------------