

The Richmond School, Skegness

Policy for the Use of Facebook and other Social Networking Sites

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set clear guidelines for the use of Facebook by staff, pupils and parents.

Introduction

Facebook is a popular Social Networking site which has been running for 6 years:

www.facebook.com

Facebook is only for users aged 13 or over, however it is very easy for young people (or indeed adults) to enter an incorrect date of birth or false information to open an account.

It is essential that, if children under the age of 13 are using Facebook, they need to be aware of how to protect their information, how to report abuse or inappropriate content and that their parents/carers must be aware that they are online. School ensures that all children in KS2 receive e-safety talks by a trained police officer. Parents are also invited to attend these talks.

With such a publicly accessible system it is open to abuse by all users. Parents are guilty of publishing critical comments about staff, children and other parents. Children can leave themselves open to abuse from other children and adults as well as being abusive about staff and other children. Staff can also be guilty of making comments about other staff, parents and children. This can sometimes be done in the belief that the correct privacy settings are in place.

Using Facebook

Staff

Staff are within their rights to use Facebook and we are not, nor would not want to be, in a position to prevent staff from using the site. However, we do ask that staff adhere to the following rules:

- Under no circumstances should pupils or ex-pupils under the age of 13 be accepted as a friend. Failure to follow this will result in disciplinary action being taken. If a child requests a member of staff as a friend then their parents must be informed and they should be reported to Facebook for being under age.

- Staff are asked to use extreme caution if a parent makes contact through Facebook. In the event of communicating with a parent or adult associated with a child who attends the school, no comments should be made about children, staff or parents. If a member of staff is found in breach of this rule then disciplinary action may follow.
- Any statements or status remarks should again not contain any comments about the school, staff, parents or children. If a member of staff is found in breach of this rule then disciplinary action may follow.

Children

Under no circumstances should children access Facebook in school. The school network system prohibits children from accessing the site but the bypassing of the system or accessing through a mobile phone will result in exclusion.

If any reports are received of children making comments about staff or other children, hard copies will be obtained and the child will be reported immediately to Facebook to have their account cancelled. The parents/carers of the child will also be notified and this could result in exclusion. If the comment is about a member of staff a referral will be made to the County's legal services.

Parents

If hard copies of inappropriate comments about members of staff or other children within school are received then the matter will be referred to the County's legal services and subsequent action will follow.

Parents must not, under any circumstances, access their Facebook accounts whilst assisting on school visits. If there is evidence to prove that this has happened then the parent will no longer be used as a helper on subsequent visits.

This policy was agreed and ratified by the governing body on: 22nd September 2011

Signed: *Stephanie Blanchard-Hall* (Chair of Governors)