

London Borough of
Redbridge



The Constance Bridgeman Centre

Knowledge, Understanding, Opportunity

Social Media Policy 2022

Social Media Policy Review

This policy was reviewed and adopted at the management committee meeting on 29th November 2022

This policy is due for review in September 2024

Signature: *Tony Clayton*

Date 29/11/22

Headteacher

Signature: *Martin Sachs*

Date 29/11/22

Chair of Management Committee

CBC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, parents and volunteers to share this commitment.

Objectives

This policy sets out CBC's policy on social networking. Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging, involvement in any social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter and posting material, images or comments on sites such as YouTube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image.

In addition, CBC 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

- Everyone at CBC 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.
- It is important to protect everyone at CBC from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is paramount and is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at CBC 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 children via social networking.
- It is completely unacceptable to communicate on social media about the school or any member of the school community in or out of work on personally owned equipment.

Aims

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

Overview and Expectations

All adults working with children have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, children, public in general and all those with whom they work.

Adults in contact with children should therefore understand and be aware that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work

setting. The guidance contained in this policy is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of schools' staff who work with children.

Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or their professional or employment-related code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

School staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.

Code of Conduct: Social Networking

Under no circumstances should staff make reference to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity/event.

The following are also not considered acceptable at CBC:

- The use of the school's name, logo, or any other published material without prior permission from the Headteacher. 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 images of employees, children, members of management committee or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.

In addition to the above everyone at CBC must ensure that they:

- Communicate with children and parents in an open and transparent way using the school 'phone number and email address.
- Never 'friend' a pupil at the school where they are working onto their social networking site.
- 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 nor professional reputation, nor 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.
- Make sure that high levels of privacy are set if they choose to use social media.

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.
- The Management Committee will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise the Headteacher of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed. The Headteacher will in turn seek advice from Human Resources (HR) where appropriate. This policy takes account of employment legislation and best practice guidelines in relation to social networking in addition to the legal obligations of governing bodies and the relevant legislation.

Safer Online Behaviour

In their own interests, staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for children or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties. All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.

Employees need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, children or other individuals connected with the school, or another school or Redbridge Local Authority could result in formal action being taken against them. This includes the uploading of photographs which might put the school into disrepute.

Mobile Phones/Camera/Video Recorder Usage

- Staff may keep their phone switched on and accessible, but must restrict their usage to appropriate times or situations.
- Photographs or images of any children within our care may only be taken following parental consent. These images should remain within this setting.
- School photographs and recordings can only be transferred to, and stored on a school computer.

- Students must hand their phones into the office on arrival and will be given access to them during social times and end of day at the headteachers discretion.

Protection of Personal Information

Staff should not give their personal e-mail addresses to children or parents. Where there is a need for communication to be sent electronically the school e-mail address should be used. Likewise, staff should keep their personal phone numbers private and not use their own mobile phones to contact children or parents in a professional capacity. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between children and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle or members of the same parish or community. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged. Staff have a responsibility to make any such contact known to the senior leadership team.

Staff should never share their work logins or passwords with other people. Staff are advised to understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

There are no circumstances that will justify adults possessing indecent images of children. Staff who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children are illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children, if proven.

Staff should not use equipment belonging to their school/service to access any pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the adult to continue to work with children.

Where indecent images of children are found by staff, the police should be immediately informed. Schools should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution. Where other unsuitable material is found, which may not be illegal but which raises concerns about that member of staff, the Headteacher should be informed and seek advice from HR. The school will not attempt to investigate or evaluate the material themselves until such advice is received.

Cyber-bullying

CBC's definition of cyber-bullying is 'the use of technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual.'

Prevention activities are key to ensuring that staff are protected from the potential threat of cyber-bullying. All employees are reminded of the need to protect themselves from the

potential threat of cyber-bullying. Following the advice contained in this guidance should reduce the risk of personal information falling into the wrong hands.

If cyber-bullying does take place, employees should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. Employees are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site.

Staff are encouraged to report all incidents of cyber-bullying to the Headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

Link with other policies

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this policy has been developed in accordance with the following legislation, guidance and policies

National policy/guidance	Local policy/guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE September 2022)</u> • <u>Data Protection Act (2018)</u> • <u>Protecting Children from Radicalisation: The Prevent Duty, 2015</u> • <u>Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education</u> • <u>Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</u> • <u>Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people</u> • <u>The Sexual Offences Act 2003</u> • <u>Teaching Online Safety in Schools 2019</u> • <u>Searching, screening and confiscation at school (DfE) 2022</u> • <u>Behaviour in Schools 2022</u> • <u>Regulation 9 of the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 Regulated activity in relation to children: scope (Factual note by HM Government) Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>London Safeguarding Children Procedures and Practice Guidance, 7th Edition, 2022</u> • <u>Redbridge Multi-Agency Safeguarding Thresholds: Are you worried about a child?, March 2022</u> • <u>CBC Safeguarding and Child Protection policy 2022</u>