



Wakefield Grammar
School Foundation

(Including EYFS)

Social Media Policy: responsible use of mobile devices

Background

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Foundation and each School's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

It should also be read alongside the Schools' PHSE and Sexual Education Programmes.

The internet, smart-phones and all types of social networking are here to stay and have changed the nature of many of the disciplinary issues that cause distress and come to our attention.

As well as giving students guidelines for what is acceptable behaviour (both in the eyes of the law and under school rules) and the consequences of not abiding by these principles, we also need to protect the reputation of the Foundation within the wider community and to protect pupils and staff from abuse.

Whilst many of these behaviours take place beyond Foundation premises, they inevitably impact upon both the wellbeing of students and the reputation of the Foundation and therefore fall within our remit.

Misuse: Statement of Policy

We will not tolerate any illegal material, and may report illegal activity to the police and/or the Local Child Safeguarding Board. If we discover that a child or young person is at risk as a consequence of online activity, we may seek guidance from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit (CEOP). We will impose a range of sanctions on any pupil who misuses technology to bully, harass or abuse another pupil.

The Policy:

- Creation, transmission and storing of digital images of a sexual or pornographic nature are prohibited
- All involved will be subject to punishment unless there are mitigating circumstances (e.g. someone's photo being taken/distributed without their knowledge or consent)
- Parents will, and Police and Social Services may, be contacted
- School(s) may search phones with reasonable suspicion and store in a secure place until the investigation is concluded, at which time the pupil must be assisted in deleting the images

Students should not:

- Use the Foundation's ICT facilities or any personal mobile phone or electronic device to access offensive or unacceptable material (such as, but not limited to, pornography, sexist or racist material) during school time or when on the school premises

- Use email, blogs, Twitter, forums or social networking sites whether accessed from a computer, mobile phone or any electronic device connected to the Foundation's network, a mobile phone network or communicating via Bluetooth, send or encourage material which is pornographic, (defined as "explicit representation of sexual activity intended to stimulate erotic rather than aesthetic or emotional feelings") illegal, offensive or annoying or in any way invades another person's privacy
- Publish any comments, images or videos about situations or individuals from any of the Schools' communities on blogs, Twitter, forums or social networking sites in the Public Domain
- Use any part of the Foundation's ICT system, a mobile phone or any electronic device to tease or bully another person or to request images of a sexual or pornographic nature

Failure to abide by the above requirements will be seen as Serious Misconduct and result in sanctions being taken in line with the relevant School's Behaviour Policy.

This also stands for:

'Sexting' via mobile phone or other device

Despite all the warnings and precautions, it is likely that some pupils will still become involved in "sexting" incidents.

Sexting is the term used to describe the sending of sexually suggestive or explicit messages or photographs, typically via mobile phone. While normally consensual in the first instance, sadly many images end up widely circulated or posted online, especially when relationships end. The originator quickly loses all control over the images, often with embarrassing - and potentially devastating - consequences.

There can also be serious legal consequences of sexting for young people: it is against the law to create, transmit or possess a sexual image of a minor. Some young people are therefore committing a crime through their actions, perhaps without knowing. There have even been rare cases of young people being prosecuted for such activities.

The first and foremost priority is to do no further harm to the pupil victim(s). Our investigation should be conducted with the outmost sensitivity for their mental wellbeing and regard for his or her privacy. We will attempt to diffuse a quick moving situation in which the image(s) can be spread to hundreds of other people in mere seconds.

Response

The revised Education Act 2011 brought to bear significant new powers and freedoms for teachers and schools. Essentially, the Act gives schools and/or teachers the power to seize and search an electronic device if they think there is good reason for doing so.

Any individuals who participate in creating an image, storing it, distributing it, copying it and/or printing it can be found guilty of a criminal act (including the underage person who took a picture of him or herself).

The Schools must determine on a case by case basis, whether they have the jurisdiction to impose disciplinary actions and/or whether it is appropriate to refer the matter to the police or social services.

It is important to remember that it won't always be appropriate to inform the police; this will depend on the nature of the incident. However, as a Foundation it is important that incidents are consistently recorded. It may also be necessary to assist the young person in removing the image from a website or elsewhere.

Disciplining of students involved in sexting is at the discretion of the Head Teacher and will depend on the specific details of the situation.

Review History

Policy written

Updated (misuses)

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L Perry / N Gunson