St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Social Networking

Our Mission Statement

**"At the heart of our community, our mission is to treat others the way that we would like to be treated, to provide a caring and stimulating environment whilst promoting enthusiasm for life-long learning where all individuals feel respected, challenged and inspired to achieve their full potential.
A school of the future, growing and working together in God's family and realising the champion within."**

Introduction

These notes provide guidance to <u>ALL</u> staff on the use of social networking websites.

Using social networking sites and other new media in a <u>personal</u> capacity

It is recognised that many employees use the internet for personal purposes, and many participate in social networking on websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, You Tube and Friends Reunited.

In the majority of cases this is uncomplicated and trouble-free. However, there are some occasions where an employee's personal life and work life can start to overlap through these sites. For example:

- Where students/parents making complaints, search the web for information about staff involved in their case – finding social networking sites, blogs and photo galleries could potentially fuel their concerns.

- Journalists increasingly use the web to research stories, and may reprint photos or comments that they find relating to school/Council employees.

- Some people also look on social networking sites to find out information about people applying for jobs.

Recommendations

Whilst the school respects an employee's right to a private life and has no wish to interfere with this, it is strongly recommended, when using such sites, to consider the potential impact on both the reputation of the employee and that of the school/Council.

The school/Council must ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires each employee using social networking websites to:

- ensure that you do not conduct yourself in a way that is detrimental to the school
- take care not to allow your interaction on these websites to damage or compromise working relationships between members of staff, students, users of Council services or other stakeholders, e.g. it would be unwise for staff to allow current students access to any information which would compromise their position and authority in a school
- not post photographs of yourself or your colleagues taken in the school, nor photographs of students, clients or visitors within the school, nor of school logos
- ensure that you never post or send abusive or defamatory messages.

Security and identity theft

Employees should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if the employee is part of a "network". Employees should <u>not</u> assume that their entries on any website will remain private.

Employees must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they upload. It is important to avoid posting detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

With this in mind, employees <u>must</u>:

- ensure that no information is made available that could provide a person with unauthorised access to the school/Council and/or any confidential information; and
- refrain from recording any confidential information regarding the school on any social networking website.

Employees are <u>recommended</u> to:

- Ideally refrain from identifying yourself as working for the school
- Keep your passwords secure, change them regularly and use passwords that are difficult to guess
- Check your security/privacy settings on social networking sites to ensure that your information is only visible to the people who you want to see it, i.e. <u>friends</u> only
- Put your name into an internet search engine (e.g. Google) to see what people can find out about you. Are you happy with what they can view?
- Help your friends and colleagues by letting them know if you notice comments/information on their pages that might be misconstrued.

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