



Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school

Social Media Policy for Staff, Governors, Volunteers, the Friends of Houghton Conquest (PTA) and Parents / Carers of children at the school

Social media activities conducted online outside Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social media sites such as WhatsApp, Snap Chat, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube, can have a negative effect on the school's reputation or image. In addition, Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school has a firm commitment to safeguarding the 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 and school representatives with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social media sites specifically. The school has a separate E-Safety Policy to promote safe and appropriate use of the internet in general.

Key Principles

This policy relates to social media outside the school. Blogging and accessing social media sites at the school using school equipment is **NOT** permitted.

Everyone associated with Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat staff and members of the school with professionalism and respect. It is important to protect everyone at Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social media sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of the Governors and all members of staff and it is essential that anyone associated with Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school including parents, pupils and ex-pupils considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social media sites. Anyone working in the school, either as a paid employee or volunteer, must **NOT** communicate with children via social media.

Most social media sites have strict terms and conditions that state the age a child should be in order to join / access the site. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that children at Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school use age-appropriate social media sites.

The school recommends encouragement of children towards the many age appropriate sites for children of lower school age that are available on the internet.

In our school we have staff, Governors and Friends of Houghton Conquest (PTA) who are also parents of children in the school and therefore have friends who are parents. If staff, Governors or volunteers are signed up to a social media site such as Facebook, that is completely their right. However, as members of staff working in a professional context, they need to be careful with what they share and with whom. Social media site comments between 'friends' could lead to a potential conflict of interest which could mean staff are in breach of their contract.

Social Media Code of Conduct for Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school

The following are **NOT** considered acceptable at Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school:

- The use of the school's name, logo, Friends of Houghton Conquest (PTA) 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 setting up of a Facebook or social media site account in the name of Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-school or the Friends of Houghton Conquest Lower School (PTA) without permission from the Headteacher.
- 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 or confidentiality.
- The posting of any photographic images of employees, children, Governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities or without that person's express permission.
- Information about children or staff or anything else to do with the school should not be shared on Facebook or other sites.
- Parents are **NOT** permitted to contact members of staff regarding any pupil related matters via social media sites or email. The same applies to all staff, Governors and Friends of Houghton Conquest (PTA) members within the school.
- Staff should **NOT** be 'friends' on a social media site with any child in the school and are also advised **NOT** to be 'friends' with pupils who have left the school for the child's and their own protection.

Staff, Governors, Volunteers, parents, pupils and ex-pupils associated with Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-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 (staff, children, parents or Governors).
- Use social media sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal / professional reputation or the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate or unprofessional postings.
- Are aware of the potential of online identity fraud and be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.
- Ensure that privacy settings are set appropriately.

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 and all breaches of this policy will be fully investigated initially by the Headteacher and, if necessary, referred to the delegated committee of the Governing Body.
- A breach of this policy by staff and / or Governors will be considered a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.
- Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy, this will result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.
- A breach of this policy by any member of the public could result in legal action being taken.
- The Governing Body 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, staff and Governors.