

SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY – 6TH FORM

INTRODUCTION

The Governing Body of South Lincolnshire Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that all students are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the growing use of social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites have become a very significant part of life for many people. They provide a positive way to keep in touch with friends and family, and can be used to exchange ideas and thoughts on common interests.

This policy will apply to all Sixth Form students attending either Bourne Academy or Spalding Academy.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE?

'A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interesting in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web-based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as email and instant messaging services.

Social networking has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people.' (source: Wikipedia)

Any site that allows the interaction between people and/or organisations can be considered social networking, though most people think of Facebook and similar sites as typical examples of social networking

AIMS

The policy aims to:

- Enable students to use social networking sites safely and securely;
- Ensure that students are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites;
- Safeguard students in connection with the use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable;
- Ensure the Governing Body maintains its duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the School and the wider community.

LEGISLATION

The following legislation must be considered when adhering to this policy:

- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Data Protection Act 1998;
- Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006;
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body shall:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and procedures are in place that deal with the use of social networking sites;
- Ensure that all students have access to this policy and that new students are made aware of it.

The Executive Headteacher and Teaching and Support Staff shall:

- Be familiar with this policy and guidelines and ensure that employees understand the policy and their own responsibilities;
- Ensure that students are aware of the risks of the use of social networking sites and the possible implications of the inappropriate use of them;
- Instigate sanctions where appropriate to do so;
- Seek advice where necessary on the approach to be adopted if they are made aware of any potential issue.

Students shall:

- Behave responsibly at all times in connection with the use of social networking sites;
- Co-operate with the school in ensuring the implementation of this policy.

USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

For students' own security all communication via social networking sites should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended. It is therefore, advised that students follow the following procedures:

- Students must not access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or using school equipment;
- Students should not place inappropriate photographs relating to the school on any social network space;
- Students should not make defamatory remarks about the Trust/other students or post anything that could potentially bring the School into disrepute;
- Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive to others.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

The Governing Body does not discourage students from using social networking sites. However, all students should be aware that the Governing Body will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. If occasions arise of what could be deemed to be online bullying or harassment, these will be dealt with in the same way as other such instances.

Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Executive Headteacher can exercise their right to monitor the use of the Trust's information systems and internet access where it is believed unauthorised use may be taking place; to ensure compliance with regulatory practices; to ensure standards of service are maintained; to prevent or detect crime, to protect the communication system and to pick up messages when someone is away from school.

If any instances of the inappropriate use of social networking sites are detected, depending on the seriousness of the allegations, action may be taken which could culminate in the student being asked to leave the Trust.

There may be instances where the Trust will be obliged to inform the police of any activity or behaviour for which there are concerns as to its legality.