Policy for Employees using Social Networking

Ringway Primary School realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is a part of of 21st century learning . To this aim, Ringway Primary School has developed the following guideline to provide direction for all employees, students and the school community when participating in online social media activities. Whether or not an employee chooses to participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion it is his or her own decision. Free speech protects educators who want to participate in social media, but the laws and courts have ruled that schools can discipline teachers if their speech, including online postings, disrupts school operations.

One should always behave as a School Employee representing the school. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. Even when you have a disclaimer or use a different user name, you will always be considered to be a school employee. Whether it is clearly communicated or not, you will be identified as working for and sometimes representing the school in what you do and say online. Always write in the first person and make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the school.

Ringway Primary School encourage employees to participate in online social activities in a professional and correct manner. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by Ringway Primary School employees and students is a reflection on the entire school community and is subject to the School Acceptable Use Policy, of which this is part. By accessing, creating or contributing to any blogs, wikis, or other social media for classroom or personal use, you agree to abide by these guidelines. Please read them carefully before posting or commenting on any blog social networking site, or creating any classroom blog, microblog (twitter), wiki and/or podcast.

Social Media Guidelines for Staff

Blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Digital Images & Video

Personal Responsibility

- School employees are personally responsible for the content they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face.
- When posting to your blog be sure you say that the information is representative of your views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of the School.
- Remember that blogs, wikis and podcasts are an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world. By virtue of identifying yourself as a Ringway Primary School employee online, you are now connected to colleagues, students, parents and the school community. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at school.
- When contributing online do not post confidential student information.

Personal Use of Social Media

- School employees are personally responsible for all comments/information they publish online. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.
- Your online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face, and be in accordance with the highest professional Standards.
- By Posting your comments having online conversations etc. on social media sites you are broadcasting to the world, be aware that even with the strictest privacy settings what you 'say' online should be within the bounds of professional discretion. Comments expressed via social networking pages under the impression of a 'private conversation' may still end up being shared into a more public domain, even with privacy settings on maximum.
- Comments related to the school should always meet the highest standards of professional discretion. When posting, even on the strictest settings, staff should act on the assumption that all postings are in the public domain.
- Before posting photographs and videos, permission should be sought from the subject where possible. This is especially the case where photographs of professional colleagues are concerned.
- Before posting personal photographs, thought should be given as to whether the images reflect on your professionalism.
- School teaching staff should not 'be friends' with parents/carers of students currently attending Ringway Primary School on social media.
- Photographs relating to alcohol or tobacco use may be deemed inappropriate. Remember, your social networking site is an extension of your personality, and by that token an extension of your professional life and your classroom. If it would seem inappropriate to put a certain photograph on the wall - is it really correct to put it online?
- Microblogging (Twitter etc.) Comments made using such media are not protected by privacy settings as witnessed by the high profile cases in the UK with sports stars being disciplined for tweets expressing personal views. Employees should be aware of the public and widespread nature of such media, and again refrain from any comment that could be deemed unprofessional.

Disclaimers

- School employees must include disclaimers within their personal blogs that the views are their own and do not reflect on their employer. For example, "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Ringway Primary School's positions, strategies, opinions, or policies."

- This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt school employees from a special responsibility when blogging.

- Classroom blogs do not require a disclaimer, but teachers are expected to moderate content contributed by students.

Copyright and Fair Use

- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines.
- A hyperlink to outside sources is recommended. Be sure not to plagiarize content, and to give credit where it is due. When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate and adheres to the school AUP.
- It is recommended that blogs be licensed under a Creative Commons License

Profiles and Identity

- Remember your association and responsibility with school in online social environments. If you identify yourself as a Ringway Primary School employee, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues, parents, and students. How you represent yourself online should be comparable to how you represent yourself in person.
- No school names, addresses or phone numbers should appear on blogs or wikis.
- Be cautious how you setup your profile, bio, avatar, etc.
- When uploading digital pictures or avatars that represent yourself make sure you select a school appropriate image. Adhere to Employee handout book guidelines as well as your AUP. Also remember not to utilize protected images. Images should be available under Creative Commons or your own.

Social Bookmarking

- Be aware that others can view the sites that you bookmark.
- Be aware of words used to tag or describe the bookmark.
- Be aware of URL shortening services. Verify the landing site to which they point before submitting a link as a bookmark. It would be best to utilize the original URL if not constrained be the number of characters as in microblogs -- i.e. Twitter.
- Attempt to link directly to a page or resource if possible as you do not control what appears on landing pages in the future.

Instant Messaging

- School employees are not allowed to use Instant Messaging on school computers

Requests for Social Media Sites

Ringway Primary School understands that 21st century learning is constantly changing technology and that many sites that are currently "blocked" by the LA's internet filter may have pedagogical significance for teacher and student use.

- If you would like to request that another online site be accessible to use for teaching and learning, please fill out the appropriate form and submit it to the appropriate department
- Requests will be reviewed and the district social media guidelines will be updated periodically throughout the school year.
- A description should be provided of the intended use of the site and what tools on the site match your needed criteria.
- A link to the sites privacy policy should be included if possible