THE CRYPT SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Lead Person: Deputy Head

Governing Body Committee: Staff & Pay

A social networking site is any website which enables its users to create profiles, form relationships and share information with other users. It also includes sites which have online discussion forums, chat-rooms, media posting sites, blogs and any other social space online. It includes but is not limited to, sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Whisper, Instagram, Vine, Tumblr, Flickr, Snapchat and Wikipedia. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

The school recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school, its staff, parents, carers and children.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during School/working hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff or any other IT equipment.

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils/students are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details so far as this is consistent with the right of an individual to private and family life.

Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Implementation of the policy

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, but has delegated day to day responsibility for its operation to the Network Manager. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risk also lies with the IT Network Manager.

All Heads of Departments have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and if necessary enforcing this policy by taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. They need to know its contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies. They also must attend any appropriate training as well as regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts. If they name the school in any personal accounts they must add an appropriate disclaimer.

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Network Manager. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to Network Manager.

Relationship with other School policies

If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
- breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality;
- breach our Disciplinary Rules;
- defame or disparage the School or our affiliates, parents, staff, pupils, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders;
- harass or bully other staff in any way or breach our Anti-harassment and bullying policy;
- unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties or breach our Equal Opportunities policy;
- breach our Data Protection policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague, pupil or parent online);
- breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

Behaviour online can be permanent and so staff must be extra cautious about what they say and what they display as it can be harder to retract.

Staff must also be aware of the particular risks to internet security that social media presents and so to comply with the existing School policy on [internet security] must take any extra measures necessary not allow any of their actions on social media sites to create vulnerability to any School systems.

Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Responsible use of social media

Staff must be aware that their role comes with particular responsibilities and they must adhere to the School's strict approach to social media.

Staff must:

- ensure that wherever possible their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that pupils cannot access information relating to their personal lives; be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that they are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see;
- obtain the prior written approval of the Headmaster, to the wording of any personal profile which they intend to create where the School is named or mentioned on a social networking site;
- seek approval from the Headmaster before they speak about or make any comments on behalf of the School on the internet or through any social networking site;
- report to their Head of Department or Line Manager immediately if they see any information on the internet or on social networking sites that disparages or reflects poorly on the School;
- immediately remove any internet postings which are deemed by the School to constitute a breach of this or any other School policy;
- weigh whether a particular posting puts their effectiveness as a teacher at risk;
- post only what they want the world to see.

Staff must not:

- provide references for other individuals, on social or professional networking sites, as such references whether positive or negative can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school;
- post or publish on the internet or on any social networking site, any reference to the School, their colleagues, parents or pupils;
- use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Staff must exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterisations;
- discuss pupils or colleagues or publicly criticise the School or staff;
- post images that include pupils;
- initiate friendships with pupils on any personal social network sites;
- accept current pupils, ex pupils who are not adults (over 18), or other children or young people, where there is a relationship developed as part of their professional role, eg music teacher, sports coach, as friends on any such sites; staff must decline any pupil-initiated friend requests, this is not intended to mean family or relations;
- use social networking sites as part of the educational process e.g. as a way of reminding pupils about essay titles and deadlines;

Personal use of social media

- We recognise that staff may work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. We authorise such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity. Staff may not however, use social media for personal use during timetabled lessons and tutor periods. While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial,

personal, religious or political solicitations or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the organisation's business are also prohibited. Staff must ensure that their use of social media does not create any breaches of internet security and therefore must be careful to avoid any applications that might interrupt our IT systems. Excessive use of social media that interrupts staff productivity will be subject to a disciplinary procedure, consistent with this policy.

Behaviour

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken

- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

We prohibit staff from using their work email address for any personal use of social media

The monitoring of social media

The contents of our IT resources and communications systems are our property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.

Social media and the end of employment

If a member of staff's employment with our School should end, for whatever reason, any personal profiles on social networking sites should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that you are no longer employed or associated with our School.

Recruitment

We may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where we do this, we will act in accordance with our data protection and equal opportunities obligations.

Reviewed by PS/ RSt / SLT – June 2014, November 2017

Approved : Full Governors' – December 2017

Review Date –November 2018,