Model Social Networking Policy

Preamble

The almost overwhelming tide of social networking sites has been described by ACAS as 'an HR accident waiting to happen'. We now know from experience that this is proving to be true and that employers are grappling with how to deal with employees who post malicious comments about an employer, colleague or student for the world to see.
Yet this has proved to be one of the more challenging changes in terms of controlling misuse by members of staff both in and outside school. Opinion is divided as to whether social media are a threat or an opportunity: on the plus side, they provide an interactive platform for marketing and getting up-to-the-minute information to a wide audience quickly and cost-effectively. On the downside, they pose a potential data security and 'school-into-disrepute' risk and the benefits described above can be counteracted by negative publicity getting into the public domain.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Governors representing the School. It aims to give advice and establish protocols for representatives of the school who use social media sites to ensure such activities are mindful of the reputation of the school, fellow professionals and colleagues working within the school and the individual's own professional standing. It pertains to using such media both inside and outside the school and principally when members use such media at home. The School Staffing Regulations 2009 place a duty on an employer of staff in schools (be that a maintained, Academy, Voluntary Aided, or Trust) to invoke the school's disciplinary procedure where acts of misconduct have occurred. This is pertinent to incidents of cyber-bullying, or other e-safety incidents covered by this policy, which may take place off-site, but is linked to membership of the School/Academy.
The School/Academy will deal with such incidents within this policy and associated behaviour and anti-bullying policies (linked to the Whole School Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Policy)

Governors

Governors are responsible for the approval of this Policy and for reviewing its effectiveness. A member of the Governing Body has taken on the role of E-Safety Governor and will work via the Senior Leadership Team to ensure compliance with this policy.

This model policy was adopted by the full governing body on 11.2.16, 01.02.17 and on 15.03.18