



SMITHDON HIGH SCHOOL

**CLUSTER POLICY ON
SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Adopted June 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

The Department for Education (DfE) advice to schools states:

'Schools should encourage all members of the school community, including parents, to use social media responsibly. Parents have the right to raise concerns relating to the education of their child, but should do so in an appropriate manner.'

'Schools should make it clear that it is not acceptable for students, parents or colleagues to denigrate and bully school staff via social media in the same way that it is unacceptable to do so face to face.' (DfE November 2014)

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

- To encourage parents and staff to use social networking sites in a positive way.
- To safeguard the school (and anyone connected with the school) from any negative effects such as abuse.
- To set out clearly what the cluster schools consider is appropriate (or inappropriate) use of social networking sites.
- To set out the actions to be taken by the school if they believe anyone has acted inappropriately.

3. ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IF THE CODE IS BROKEN

In the Smithdon Cluster of schools, we work hard to prevent bullying amongst our students. We are not prepared to allow parents to behave in a way which would not be accepted from their children. If this code is broken, the following process will be implemented, for the sake of our students, staff and parents.

- In the first instance, the matter will be discussed with those involved to try to remedy the situation.
- If the problem continues, the school will take legal advice.
- The school's concerns will be set out in writing, warning the person involved and requesting them to remove the posting.
- The school will contact the police if the posting is threatening or obscene.
- Access to school websites and forums will be blocked for the person concerned. The school will also contact the provider of the social networking site to complain about the content.
- The school may take other legal action against the offending person.

4. SMITHDON CLUSTER CODE FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING AND INTERNET SITES

Positive elements:

Social networking sites can assist parents in finding information about the school.

Sites can be used to boost students' learning and achievements.

They can be used to provide feedback to organisations such as OFSTED.

Before using social networking sites, staff, students and parents are all asked to consider the following points:

- Is the social networking site the best place to raise concerns or let off steam?
- Would it be better to talk to someone at the school rather than posting thoughts and ideas on the internet?
- Will the things you want to say cause upset or offence?
- Could your post be considered as cyber-bullying?
- If you post threats or abuse online, you may be subject to legal action.

The following actions are considered inappropriate by the cluster schools and may also be against the law:

- Making allegations online regarding members of staff or students.
- Making complaints about the school or our staff.
- Posting negative or offensive comments relating to the school, our staff or students.
- Making abusive comments about a person's race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- Threats of violence.