

**POLICY:**      **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

**DATE:** July 2014

**PERSON RESPONSIBLE:**    Headteacher

**MONITORING:** SLT

**REVIEWED:**    July 2017

**REVIEW DATE:** July 2019

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Adopted by Governors on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017

### RATIONALE

Social networks are rapidly growing in popularity and used by all. For individuals, social networking sites provide tremendous potential opportunities for staying in touch with friends and family. Educational networking sites are growing in use although they may be restricted and not available to the general public. These include resources such as Google Drive, Moodle, educational wikis, and professional online communities.

### PURPOSE

To ensure that Paget School is well informed about appropriate behaviour relating to social networking.

### PRINCIPLES

As professionals working in schools we have a professional image to uphold and how we conduct ourselves online helps determine this image. As reported by the media, there have been instances of staff demonstrating professional misconduct while engaging in inappropriate dialogue about their schools and/or students or posting pictures and videos of themselves engaged in inappropriate activity. However, increasingly, some educators' online identities are too often public and can cause serious repercussions.

### CONCLUSION

Staff are expected to follow these procedures/guidelines and ensure that they act in a professional and appropriate manner at all times in order to safeguard themselves and avoid allegations of misconduct.

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| <b><u>WORKING PRACTICE:</u></b>   | <b>SOCIAL NETWORKING</b> | <b><u>DATE:</u></b> July 2014        |
| <b><u>PERSON RESPONSIBLE:</u></b> | Headteacher              | <b><u>MONITORING:</u></b> SLT        |
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**The guidelines on social networking relate to all Paget School staff.**

One of the hallmarks of social networks is the ability to *friend* others – creating a group of others that share interests and personal news. Paget staff should not accept invitations to *friend* students within these social networking sites. When students gain access into a member of staff’s network of friends and acquaintances and are able to view personal photos, the student-staff dynamic is altered. *Friending* students provides more information than one should share in an educational setting. It is important to maintain a professional relationship with students to avoid relationships that could cause bias in the classroom, or more seriously, allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

For the protection of your professional reputation, the school expects the following standards and practices to be met:

**Social Networking**

- Do not accept students as *friends* on social networking sites and decline any student-initiated *friend* requests
- Do not initiate *friendships* with students
- Remember that people classified as “friends” have the ability to download and share your information with others
- If you wish to use networking protocols as part of the educational process, please work with our school network manager and ICT staff to identify and use restricted, school-endorsed networking platforms.
- Any contact between staff, students and parents/carers should be via school emails, school phone numbers, Google Drive or the Paget Twitter account.
- Staff should never give out their personal email address or phone number and should never contact students/families in this way.
- Staff should exercise considerable caution when having *friends* who are ex students, particularly when these ex students have siblings in school.

**Networks**

- When you join a site or set up a page, check whether you are automatically placed in any networks
- Disable networks as it may be that other members of those networks can see what you are posting even if they are not your ‘friends’.

**Content**

- Do not use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libellous.
- Do not use (negative) commentary which could bring yourself, Paget staff or Paget School into disrepute
- Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions and derogatory remarks or characterisations
- Consider whether a particular posting puts your effectiveness as a Paget member of staff at risk
- Post only what you want the world to see. Imagine students, parents/carers, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors visiting your site.

- Do not discuss students, parents/carers or co-workers or publically criticise the school policies or personnel, or the way the school operates
- Do not post images that include students
- Do not have an image of yourself that shows you in a way that could be used against you or demeans your professional position. Scantily clad males and females, holding alcoholic drinks, and embarrassing poses all have the potential to be misconstrued

## **Security**

- Due to security risks, be cautious when installing the external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendar programmes and games
- Run updated malware protection to avoid infections of spyware and adware that social networking sites might place on your computer
- Be careful not to fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your wall, providing a link for you to click, leading to a fake log-in page
- Visit your profile's security and privacy settings. As a minimum, those working in a school should have privacy settings set to "only friends"
- "Friends of friends" and "Networks and Friends" open your content to a large group of unknown people. Your privacy and that of your family may be at risk. People you do not know may be looking at you, your home, your children and grandchildren – your lives!