

The Crossways Schools Parents Guidelines for Social Networking

The Crossways Schools is a caring organisation which aims to create a stimulating learning environment in which every individual child has the opportunity to be the best that they can be. We are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body and we value our strong relationship with parents and carers. Together this helps us achieve the very best for the children in a mutually supportive partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community.

As a partnership, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip their children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continually welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of the school and provide us with feedback in an appropriate and timely manner. This can include ad hoc feedback to class teachers, at prearranged events such as parents evening, directly to the Executive Head Teacher or to the Chair of Governors.

To truly create the best outcomes for our children requires the relationship between home and school to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust and mutual respect. We can achieve this through:

- Supporting and adding to the caring ethos and values of the schools,
- Treating others with dignity and respect through actions and all forms of communication,
- Approaching school staff for help to resolve an issue in an appropriate and timely manner,
- Correcting our children's actions, especially when they could lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour- both on and off school premises.

Social Network Sites

Social networking is used everywhere and is a common feature of many people's lives. However if you want to say anything about your child's school or staff on social media there are a few simple guidelines we need to insist you follow, in order to keep all the children in school **safe** and to protect you from possible consequences of your online actions. We already teach the children how to be safe online and you can reinforce this at home by showing your child(ren) how to communicate responsibly online.

Part of our role as a school is to ensure that no confidential information about a child or family is unintentionally disclosed by a parent/carer or a member of staff. There have been several high profile cases in the news when people making offensive comments on social media have been prosecuted.

There are two parts to this brief guidance. The first part is about parent/carer responsibilities. The second is information about what staff are expected to do if they use social media, or come across information about the school (children, parents or staff) on social media.

Guidelines for Parents and Carers

- Parents are personally responsible for the content that they post, share or respond to online.

- Postings and online conversations cannot be considered as private so confidential or specific information about the children, staff or other parents should not be shared.
- At all times be respectful of others.
- Never include children's full names (even your own children's).
- Never post or tag photographs etc without ensuring that you have the right permission.
- If there is something you are concerned about in school please contact the school to sort it out rather than discussing it on social network sites.
- Should you become aware that sites are being misused you have a responsibility to report this.
- Do not comment on or forward unsupported information or rumours.
- If an online conversation looks as if it might be derogatory you should not get involved in the discussion and refer the person to the school.
- You should not accept children as friends on a social networking site.
- If you want to set up a site that refers to your child's school then please let the school know.
- When using social networking sites for school purposes remember that this is a school not personal area so personal comments should not be posted.
- If the site is representing the school then please make sure that the good name of the school is preserved and not brought into disrepute.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

- No member of staff or volunteer is allowed to discuss any matter to do with pupils, staff or parents/carers through social media because of safeguarding requirements. This includes tagging photographs etc.
- Some members of staff or volunteers may have social network accounts as a parent or member of a local community group. They must not respond to any comments about the school they come across.
- Staff and volunteers are obliged to inform the school leadership of any concerns they have about comments being made by others.
- Staff have a duty to monitor online spaces and report anything of concern to the school leadership.

The school will always request that any inaccurate or offensive postings are removed or the person reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. If necessary in an extreme case, the school will take legal advice.

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