

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>iCollege Social Networking Responsibilities</b>
<b>Academic Year:</b>	<b>22-23</b>
<b>Policy Reference:</b>	<b>ER 17</b>
<b>Description:</b>	The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to iCollege staff on the appropriate use of social networking.
<b>Status:</b>	All staff
<b>Category:</b>	Guidance
<b>Review frequency:</b>	2 years
<b>Contact:</b>	Monica Romano
<b>Version:</b>	3
<b>Who was consulted:</b>	Policy 2019 – 2021 reviewed and up-dated: acronyms, Appendix A, safeguarding statement. JD March 23
<b>Other relevant policies:</b>	Safeguarding, H & S, Staff Conduct
<b>Acronyms:</b>	MC - Management Committee FC – Finance Committee PERS - Personnel Committee LA - Local Authority WBC - West Berkshire Council HT - Headteacher SLT - Senior Leadership Team
<b>Date for Review:</b>	March 2025

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<b>Purpose of guidance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is to support the safeguarding of yourself, the <b>iCollege</b> services and all within them. It is based on the professional responsibilities required to work in education.</li> <li>• It has been written to help you consider the implications of what you do electronically. For example, the possibility of compromising situations to yourself and the services, potential 'grooming' situations, confidential information being made public etc.</li> <li>• Remember; <b>you could lose your job!</b></li> <li>• Remember that friends of friends of friends...of friends can gain access to your material.</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the security of your profile and be aware who has access to your information if you use a social networking site</li> <li>• Consider the appropriateness of information that you volunteer about yourself</li> <li>• Consider the appropriateness of photographs of yourself</li> </ul>
<b>Don't</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a work PC or laptop for personal social networking</li> <li>• Add photographs of school events</li> <li>• Comment on incidents that occur within the <b>iCollege</b> Service</li> <li>• Give detail or talk in a negative way about the <b>iCollege</b> Service</li> <li>• Add current learners as 'friends' and consider the appropriateness of keeping in touch with past learners</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is evidence that an ex-employee is bringing <b>iCollege</b> into disrepute via social networking then the West Berkshire legal team will be informed. This may constitute misconduct / gross mis-conduct.</li> <li>• If a learner on roll with the <b>iCollege</b> is found to be 'friends' with a member of staff from their previous school, then the Headteacher of that school will be informed.</li> <li>• WBC Social Networking - Advice for Schools Appendix A</li> </ul>

<b>Change Record</b>				
<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>MC Minute Reference</b>	<b>Description of Amendments</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
3	March 23			March 25
<b>Approved by:</b>				
<b>Date:</b>				
<b>Review date:</b>				

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## Appendix A

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to schools on the appropriate use of social networking by school staff.
- 1.2. The governing body may wish to approve additional guidance after consultation with staff and relevant professional associations to meet the operational needs of the school.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this advice note is to guide the judgements of management and staff using social networking sites and the information that they provide through these by:
  - 2.11 Advising management and staff to ensure that children are safeguarded
  - 2.12 Advising management and staff to ensure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected through use of social networking sites.
  - 2.13 Ensuring that the school is not subject to legal challenge as a result of school employees using and providing information on social networking sites e.g. data protection, discrimination and other sensitive information.
- 2.2 School managers should make all staff aware of this advice note and the expectations of staff conduct related to social networking. For new staff this should form part of their induction.

### 3. Social Networking Sites / Applications

- 3.1 Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications. Examples include, but are not limited to Twitter, Facebook, MSN, WhatsApp, Instagram, Reddit, snapchat, TikTok, Messenger, Discord, YouTube etc.

### 4. Staff Conduct

- 4.1 The West Berkshire Model Code of Conduct for schools (paragraph 4.1) states "*In general terms, the school expects that the conduct of its employees is such that no justifiable complaint can be made by parents, pupils, colleagues, Governors, other bodies or agencies or members of the community in relation to conduct and behaviour of school staff.*" This principle applies to the use of social networking sites.
- 4.2 The way in which school staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the school and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents of the school. In their use of social networking sites, staff should be aware that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.

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- 4.3 It is recommended that school staff take adequate precautions when using social networking sites/applications, both in vetting material that could be connected to them (through their own profile and information added about them) and through the use of appropriate security settings.
- 4.4 It is recommended that school employees should not be “friends” with pupils on social networking sites as this could be viewed as a safeguarding issue.
- 4.5 It is recommended that management and school staff do not identify their school on social networking sites as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the school.
- 4.6 It is recommended that the school identifies a member of their senior leadership team from whom staff can seek advice on their personal use of social networking sites and/or report concerns about the inappropriate use of a social networking site/application by another member of staff.
- 4.7 Where schools use email and learning platforms to communicate with pupils, e.g. about homework, the Headteacher should set out local guidance around the use of these applications for both pupils and staff.
- 4.8 Where pupils behave inappropriately with staff this should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team and dealt with through the school’s pupil disciplinary process.
- 4.8 The Model Disciplinary Rules state that the follow are examples of gross misconduct:
- 4.8.1 (paragraph 5.2) *Conduct that is a serious abuse of position – e.g. entering into a personal relationship with a pupil.*
- 4.8.2 (paragraph 5.10) *Criminal offences and other conduct outside employment could cause an employee’s position at the school to become untenable particularly in circumstances where the conduct or offence is unacceptable to colleagues, management or parents or where the conduct or offence has the potential to affect the reputation of the school.*
- 4.8.3 (paragraph 5.11) *Making defamatory statements in the course of employment (e.g. making statements that are or could be slanderous or libelous) whether orally, written, or in electronic communication.*
- 4.9 Breach of these disciplinary rules in the section above (4.8) in relation to social networking or any inappropriate use of social networking sites and applications by staff will be dealt with through the School’s Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Keeping Children Safe in Education**

***“The iCollege and its Management Committee take seriously the duty and responsibility to have arrangements about safeguarding and promote the health and welfare of children. This includes protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.”***

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