

# Digital Communications Policy



## King Henry VIII 3-19 School Ysgol 3-19 Brenin Harri'r VIII

We believe in the limitless capacity for everyone to achieve great things.

Effective from: September 2023

Approved by Governors: July 2023

Next Review Due: July 2024

## **Purpose**

Digital communications are an essential part of day to day business, and we can't thrive without communicating in this way. It is a very useful tool to engage with our pupil families, to communicate our school activity and to publicise our school. E-mail is a fundamental way of staff communication within the school. Digital communications are a fundamental way of updating parents and carers on key information.

Employees are actively encouraged to consider the use of digital communications to complement other traditional communication methods.

This policy helps school staff make the right decisions about the use of digital communications and understand the impact should they get it wrong. It outlines the standards we expect of people when using social media and publishing on the internet, how we will monitor use and what will happen if it is used inappropriately.

## **Scope**

This policy covers any digital communications including:

- E-mail
- Social media
- Text messages
- Websites
- Blogs
- Podcasts
- Comments on website articles

Social media includes all social networking sites, including but not exclusive to, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, LinkedIn, Yammer, Pinterest, Flickr, etc.

## **Responsibility for Implementation of the Policy**

Employees are responsible for their own compliance with this policy, and for ensuring that it is consistently applied to protect the privacy, confidentiality, reputation and interests of King Henry VIII 3-19 School.

All employees are to ensure that they take the time to read and understand the policy. Any concerns must be reported to your line manager in the first instance. Alternatively, and if this is not possible, employees are to seek advice from the Senior Leadership Team.

Line managers will help staff with any queries and how to successfully use digital communications as a business tool.

## **Using digital Communications sites in our school name**

All digital communications sites that demonstrate they are part of King Henry VIII 3-19 school are to be set up using 'corporate branding' guidelines. For example, Twitter accounts should carry the school name and logo.

The school has clear branding guidance which is to be communicated and shared with all staff involved in digital communication.

All communications, especially those by social media (for example, twitter posts), are to be checked for clarity and accuracy before proceeding. This is to avoid readers mis-reading the intended message. The Senior Leadership Team will regularly check and sample social media posts.

Under no circumstances are personal views to be posted on school social media accounts.

## **Using work-related and personal digital communications**

Staff are permitted and encouraged to use relevant social media websites for school business activity. Social media should add value to our school and be a communication platform similar to our telephones and email systems.

There is often a fine line between the use of digital media as a work tool and personal use as an individual outside of the work role. Employees must take care to separate the two as sometimes opinions may conflict.

Staff who use social networks or blogs for personal use should consider using a disclaimer that states that opinions on this site are your own. An example: "The views expressed are my own and don't reflect the views of my employer".

## **Some important rules when using digital communications**

King Henry VIII 3-19 School staff are to adhere to the following when using school digital communication:

- Only set up a digital communications account if you are able to manage it and give speedy and appropriate replies to correspondence
- You must give you line manager and the school's safeguarding team access to any business digital accounts for business continuity and monitoring/checking purposes
- Remember and understand that all information posted as part of your job role is a school record, evidence of the school's work, and may be used for reference by others in future.
- You are personally responsible for content you publish.
- Be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to the reputation of King Henry VIII 3 -19 School.
- Do not upload, post, or forward any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content. This includes about the school, colleagues, members of the public or MCC as an organisation. It could result in disciplinary action.

- Never share private or confidential information.

## **Monitoring**

Staff are to be aware that the use of social media, on behalf of the school, will be monitored. Monitoring is only carried out as permitted by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.

## **Actions in response to staff mistakes with digital communications**

The school recognises that it is always possible to make a mistake and get it wrong. If this happens staff are to tell their line manager immediately and agree remedial action to avoid embarrassment and reputational damage.

If staff breach this policy, they need to know that action could be taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. Where evidence of misuse is found, the school may undertake a more detailed investigation in line with the Disciplinary Procedure.

Misuse can also, in certain circumstances, become a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against the employee and the school. If necessary, Monmouthshire County Council may hand over information to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

Anyone who feels that they have been harassed, bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague through a digital communication platform (whether from a work or personal account) should inform the Designated Safeguarding Person who will investigate the matter.