<div style="text-align: center;">

OUSEDALE SCHOOL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF

</div>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia. While recognising the benefits of these media as new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Ousedale School staff are expected to follow when using social media.

1.2 It is crucial that young people, parents and the public at large have confidence in Ousedale School's decisions and provision. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of young people, staff and the reputation of Ousedale School are safeguarded.

1.3 The policy aims to provide a balance to allow innovation and personal usage whilst providing a framework to protect staff and students.

1.4 This policy has been drawn up in consultation with SLT, Heads of Department and the Governors' Personnel Committee.

1.5 Staff members also must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

1.6 This policy applies to all members of staff at the school.

1.7 Employees who are found to be in breach of the policy will be managed in line with the school's disciplinary policy.

2.0 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- that the school is not exposed to legal risks;
- that the reputation of the school or staff is not adversely affected;
- that staff and students are safe
- that members of the public are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

2.2 The scope of this policy acknowledges that Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly and indirectly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

2.3 This policy applies to personal web space such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Tumblr, Snap Chat and Pinterest), blogs, mircoblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites, Podcasts and open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube.

2.4 The Internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media. However, the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

3.0   SCHOOL PROFILES

3.1 No member of staff should represent the school online without the prior consent of the Head Teacher. This includes (but is not restricted to) Facebook profiles, pages and groups, Twitter accounts, blogs and websites.

3.2 Where permission has been granted for these applications they must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claims for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.

3.3 School profiles must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.

3.4 They must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.

3.5 Where individuals from partner organisations are involved and are acting on behalf of Ousedale School, they will also be expected to comply with the relevant school policies.

4.0   PERSONAL PROFILES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

4.1 It is recognised that many staff maintain accounts on a number of online applications and the school is not seeking to control these. However, when someone clearly identifies their association with the school and/or discusses their work, they are expected to behave appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with the school's values and policies and their individual responsibility as a school employee.

4.2 All employees are reminded of the need to maintain both student and colleague confidentiality when using the different types of social media as outlined in this policy. To this end:

4.2.1   School staff should use their professional judgement when deciding to invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Ousedale School.

4.2.2   Any communication received from students on any personal social media site must be reported.

4.2.3   If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported.

4.2.4   Members of the school staff must set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

4.2.5   On devices where social media is used (tablet, mobile phone, desktop computer, etc) and software updates are installed, the privacy settings must be reviewed.

4.2.6   All email communication between staff and members of the school community must be made from an official school email account.

4.2.7   Staff must not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher or SLT.

4.2.8   During the pandemic we support staff keeping in contact with students by phone, particularly SEND and more vulnerable students. Staff are aware of how they need to conduct these conversations;

4.2.9   Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media account, no matter how tenuous this may appear at the time.

4.2.10 Staff must not accept any current pupil of any age as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

4.2.11 Staff must not represent their personal views as those of Ousedale School on any social medium.

4.3   The intention of this Policy is not to stop school staff from conducting legitimate activities on the Internet, nor to stifle constructive criticism, but serves to highlight those areas in which problems can arise for both individual staff members and the school. Please note there have been several cases elsewhere where staff have been dismissed by their employer for inappropriate use of a social website or other media.

4.4   To this end when identified as an Ousedale School employee (For example by displaying an @ousedale.org.uk e-mail address, by joining Ousedale School-

related networks on social network sites or by making reference to Ousedale School as your employer), people:

4.4.1 Should not reveal confidential information about our students, staff, or the school.

4.4.2 Should consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts and therefore not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Ousedale School and the profession into disrepute.

4.4.3 Should act in a transparent manner when altering online sources of information such as websites like Wikipedia.

4.4.4 Should not use the Internet in any way to attack or abuse colleagues.

4.4.5 Should not post defamatory, derogatory or offensive comments on the Internet about colleagues, students, their work or Ousedale School.

4.4.6 Should consider the school's Equality Policy when posting any content, making comments or joining 'groups'.

4.5 Staff should exercise caution when showing allegiances to groups or causes. This could take the form of joining groups, "Liking" Facebook Pages, joining LinkedIn groups or posting comments on comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

4.6 Staff should not engage in contact with students via social media.

5.0 PROTECTION OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION AND MEDIA

5.1 Many social networks encourage sharing of personal information, much of which can be used in identity theft. This includes date of birth, place of birth, universities and names of family members. Third parties collect vast amounts of information through data mining of open profiles that share this willingly.

5.2 It is expected that staff are mindful to protect their personal data online against identity theft.

5.3 Photographs that identify staff in compromising situations, for example, where the content and pictures are indecent, or obscene or offensive materials are displayed which they (or others) would not want to share with students, should be protected at all times as these may compromise your position with students and staff.

6.0 BLOGGING AND MICROBLOGGING

6.1 Services such as Twitter, Blogger, Wordpress, Tumblr or websites can be used productively to benefit the individual or the school. This policy is not intended to restrict this as long as the confidential information used in your work is not revealed which would bring the school into disrepute.

6.2   Personal blogs, microblogs and websites should not reveal confidential information about staff, students, parents or the school. This includes details of policy, plans or internal discussions. If in doubt about the nature of confidentiality you should discuss this with your line manager.

6.3   Staff who have a blog or wish to start a blog which identifies them as an employee of Ousedale School should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and seek advice from the Head Teacher.   In these cases the blog or website should include a visible disclaimer "These are my personal views and not those of my employer".

6.4   If staff have concerns about content on their website and whether it contravenes these policies they should discuss it with their line manager and seek advice from the Head Teacher.

6.5   If a member of staff is offered payment to produce blog posts for a third party this could be a conflict of interest and must be discussed with the Head Teacher.

7.0   RESPONDING TO THE MEDIA

7.1   If a member of staff is approached by the media using any method of social media, they should not respond and should report it immediately to the Head Teacher.

Approved by Personnel Committee - 18 November 2020
To Full Governing Body - 7 December 2020
Date of Next Review - November 2023