



# Hope Academy

A joint Catholic & Church of England Academy

## SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

*Mission Statement:*

*“A community of learners of all ages from the local area committed to mutual service where all can flourish, be their best and work for the common good to the glory of God and his creation.”*

APPROVED	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2012		
REVIEW DATE			
SIGNED PRINCIPAL		PRINT NAME	
SIGNED CHAIR OF GOVERNORS		PRINT NAME	

## Introduction

This policy sets out the Academy's framework governing what is deemed to be acceptable use of social networking sites (SNS). The purpose of this policy is to prevent unacceptable use of SNS by Academy staff, governors and students; thereby to protect the Academy's staff, governors and students from undesirable comments, materials, filming, intimidation or harassment, thus keeping the reputation of the Academy protected.

This policy will operate in conjunction with other policies including the 'E-Safety' and 'Internet Acceptable Use' policy. It is recognised that these documents must be reviewed and revised regularly in response to the ever-changing ICT environment at the Academy.

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook and posting comments, videos or images such as Twitter or You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. In addition, Hope Academy has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff, governors and students with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

## The Policy

1. Staff, governors and students should not use SNS to make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the Academy, or anyone at or connected with the Academy.
2. Staff, governors and students should not post information and photos about themselves, or school-related matters, publicly that they wouldn't want employers, colleagues, pupils or parents to see.
3. Staff and governors should not accept friend requests from pupils at Hope Academy or allow followers using private SNS, such as Facebook or Twitter. Social networking features embedded into the Academy's Virtual Learning Environment may be used to communicate and collaborate with students.  
*"By accepting such requests you could be making yourself vulnerable by sharing personal information or by having access to personal information about your pupils. You may be potentially leaving yourself open to allegations of inappropriate contact or conduct or even find yourself exposed to unwanted contact."* Childnet International TDA
4. Staff and governors should consider carefully the implications of befriending parents or ex-pupils using SNS and let school management know if they decide to do this.
5. Staff, governors and students should not disclose confidential or sensitive information; or disclose information or images on SNS that could compromise the security of the school.
6. Posting, using SNS, of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the Academy whilst engaged in school activities is prohibited without prior permission from the relevant staff, governors or parents.
7. If staff, governors or students come across, or are made aware of, inappropriate use of SNS (including under age use of these services), they should report these to the appropriate person within Hope Academy – the school point of contact for safeguarding and/or the Head of School / member of SLT with responsibility for behaviour.
8. Staff, governors and students should not use private SNS, such as Facebook and Twitter during working hours.
9. Staff, governors and students at Hope Academy must ensure that they:
  - a. Use SNS responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
  - b. Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves on SNS which may compromise their personal safety and security.

### ***In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:***

Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

The Governing Body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.