



**Severn Valley School**

# **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

(ICT, Technology and Social Media)  
for All Permanent and Temporary Staff &  
Management Committee Members

Date Approved: January 2022

Date of Review: January 2025

**MONITORING, REVIEW & EVALUATION**  
Headteacher

## **ICT, Technology and Social Media Acceptable Use Policy for All Permanent and Temporary Staff & Management Committee (MC) Members**

Severn Valley School (SVS) is committed to providing ICT facilities (including internet and email) to MC members, employees and students and to promoting awareness of the benefits and dangers involved. Whilst ICT, the internet and related technologies have immense benefits improper use of the internet, including social networking sites or email could bring the school into disrepute and may lead to legal claims against individuals and/or SVS.

### **Computer network**

- Obtaining, downloading, sending, printing, displaying, distributing or otherwise transmitting or gaining access to materials which are pornographic, obscene, racist, unlawful, abusive, offensive or inappropriate will be regarded as gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.
- Distributing abusive, discriminatory or defamatory statements will be regarded as gross misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action.
- You are responsible for the security of your passwords.
- The network must not be used for commercial purposes, e.g. buying or selling goods.
- Any software that is installed must be covered by the appropriate licensing agreements.
- Copyright of materials available on the network must be respected.

### **Internet/Email**

- Use of internet and email must be solely for legitimate SVS purposes.
- Use of the internet and email are subject to scrutiny by Smoothwall. Any action that might damage the good reputation of the service will be dealt with as a serious act of misconduct.
- Use of the internet for personal financial gain, gambling, political purposes or advertising is forbidden.
- Emails sent from SVS should contain the same professional levels of language and content as applied to letters or other media.
- You are responsible for the email you send and for any contacts you make that might result in inappropriate emails being received.
- Posting anonymous messages and forwarding chain letters is forbidden.
- Appropriate security must be used or applied before confidential or sensitive information is sent via the internet or email.
- The Local Authority and Safeguarding Children guidelines state that teaching staff should avoid contacting students on social networking sites. This is to avoid any possible misinterpretation of motives and the risk of any allegations being made.
- Exercise caution when opening emails and messages from an unknown external source or where, for any reason, they appear suspicious.
- Do not send messages from another user's account or under an assumed name unless specifically authorised.

### **Use of photographs, video and digital images**

- MC members & staff must only use SVS equipment to record, or take photographs of pupils, and only then if the relevant permission has been obtained.

### **Mobile Phones**

- Professional tone to be used in all phone calls made and text messages sent using work phones.
- Personal calls, other than in an emergency, are forbidden on work phones.
- Calls and contact to pupils and parents should be restricted to the hours of 8.00am to 6.00pm and only using SVS telephones or mobile telephones. Staff must not share their personal contact details.
- Direct contact with pupils by telephone calls or text messages is limited to essential service needs only.

### **Social Media**

Social Media is used increasingly across society and is recognised as a hugely valuable communication tool. However, the open nature of the internet means that social networking sites can leave professionals (such as MC members, teachers and other staff working in education) vulnerable if they fail to observe a few simple precautions. This policy is designed to protect SVS MC members & staff and pupils from potential harm or from becoming victims of malicious, upsetting or inadvisable contact.

- MC & staff members **must not** identify themselves as employees of SVS or service providers for the school in their personal web space **excluding** LinkedIn. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.
- MC & staff members **must not make contact through any personal ICT or social medium with any pupil**, whether from SVS or any other school, unless the pupil\* is your own family member OR an existing close family friend (e.g. your Godchild). SVS does not expect MC & staff members to discontinue contact with their own family members or significant family friends via personal social media if SVS starts providing support for them. However, MC members & staff are required to inform their line manager of their relationship/association with any new or existing pupil so that any potential conflicts of interest or other potential issues can be discussed and avoided.  
*\* 'pupil' is defined as any young person aged 18 or under in a school or college. Or, any young person who has been a pupil with SVS (or pupil staff have met in another school in their professional capacity) who is no longer in a school or a sixth form up until they reach the age of 18.*
- MC & staff **must not have social media contact with any pupils' family members (parents/carers)**. This is in-line with the NASUWT teachers' union and other unions which say that teachers should never under any circumstances accept Facebook friend requests from parents of a pupil.
- If MC & staff members need to communicate with pupils for work purposes they can

only do so through the official SVS email or SVS work mobile 'phone. Personal email addresses/phone numbers **must not** be shared with pupils or parents.

- MC & staff members **must decline 'friend requests' from pupils** they may receive in their personal social media accounts. Pupils/parents will be informed that this will be the case on induction. *\*(Pupil(s) as defined above.)*
- On leaving SVS's employment, MC & staff members **must not** contact pupils\* by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, MC & staff members must not contact pupils\* from their former schools by means of personal social media. *\*(Pupil(s) as defined above.)*

Any information MC & staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, County Council staff and other parties and service or County Council corporate information must not be discussed on their personal web space or social media sites.

- Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting MC & staff members who can be identified as SVS or County Council staff from their identity badges or logos identifying sensitive service or County Council premises (e.g. PRS's, schools and specialist units) must not be published on personal web space or social media sites.
- Service email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- MC & staff members must not edit open access online encyclopedias such as *Wikipedia* in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself.
- SVS or County Council corporate service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal web space/social media sites.
- SVS does not permit personal use of social media or the internet during core contracted work hours. Access to social media sites for personal reasons is not allowed between 9am and 4.15pm (apart from during lunch breaks). Staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties.
- **Caution** is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' on personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place. MC & staff **must not** use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, SVS or the County Council.
- MC & staff members **are advised to set the privacy levels of their personal social media sites as strictly as they can** and to opt out of public listings on social

networking sites to protect their own privacy. MC & staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away. Appendix 1 “*Social networking – Guidelines for NASUWT members which sets out minimum recommended privacy settings for Facebook*)

## **BREACHES OF THE POLICY**

- Any breach of this policy may be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the MC or staff members involved in line with SVS Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of SVS or the County Council or any illegal acts or acts that render SVS or the County Council liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- Contracted providers of SVS or County Council services must inform the relevant service or County Council officer immediately of any breaches of this policy so that appropriate action can be taken to protect confidential information and limit the damage to the reputation of the service and the County Council. Any action against breaches should be according to contractors’ internal disciplinary procedures.

## **Monitoring & Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the policy review cycle and an assessment made of its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout SVS.

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**I have read and accept the terms of the:**

**ICT, Technology and Social Media Acceptable Use  
Policy for all Permanent and Temporary Staff & MC  
Members**

*Please tick to  
confirm you have  
read this policy*

**I understand the implications of any breach of this policy as outlined above.**

Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

### **NASUWT The Teachers' Union**

#### **Using Social Media Safely**

For teachers, using social media has many benefits in terms of keeping in touch with colleagues and enhancing the learning process.

For trade unions like NASUWT, it also plays a fundamental role in communicating with members and receiving feedback that contributes to union policy.

Yet unfortunately, the Union is undertaking a high level of casework involving incidents of social media usage that have compromised the professional position of teachers.

Below are a few general guidelines on how to use social media safely and wisely.

If you encounter any difficulties related to social media, members in England should contact the advice line on 03330 145550 while members in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland should contact their [National Centre](#).


#### **General Guidelines**

- If in doubt, don't put it up!
- Do not post anything that could be construed as defamatory or discriminatory against others.
- Employers increasingly use social media to look at candidates before or after a job interview. If you would not want your employer to see something, take it down!
- Any post can be potentially quoted by the media
- Do not get involved in online arguments - they can escalate quickly!

## Facebook

- Do not make or accept friend requests by pupils or parents.
- Ensure your privacy settings are adequate. You can determine who sees your posts and most importantly, ensure that you get to approve any pictures in which you may be tagged before the picture is published. You can also disable your profile from certain search engines.

### Privacy Settings and Tools

|                              |  |                    |                                  |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Who can see my stuff?</b> | Who can see your future posts?   | Friends except...  | <a href="#">Edit</a>             |
|                              | Review all your posts and things you're tagged in  |                    | <a href="#">Use Activity Log</a> |
|                              | Limit the audience for posts you've shared with friends of friends or Public?              |                    | <a href="#">Limit Past Posts</a> |
| <b>Who can contact me?</b>   | <b>Who can see my friend requests?</b>   |                    | <a href="#">Close</a>            |
|                              |  Everyone |                    |                                  |
| <b>Who can look me up?</b>   | Who can look you up using the email address you provided?                                  | Friends of friends | <a href="#">Edit</a>             |
|                              | Who can look you up using the phone number you provided?                                   | Everyone           | <a href="#">Edit</a>             |
|                              | Do you want search engines outside of Facebook to link to your Profile?                    | No                 | <a href="#">Edit</a>             |

- You may wish to create a separate account for school-related purposes that does not contain your real name.
- When joining or being added to a Facebook group, always check whether it is Public, Closed (where anyone can see the members of the group but not the discussion) or Secret (where neither the members or the discussion are visible)
- Should you receive any abusive messages, do not delete them but keep a record of them.

## Twitter

- Retweeting can be viewed as a sign of endorsement. This may be inappropriate in some circumstances.
- Twitter is a much more public forum than Facebook.