SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The School recognises that young people increasingly communicate with each other by means of interactive social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites. Many private groups use MSN Messenger and text-only message boards are also used extensively.

Most of these and similar websites are used legitimately by most users, but there is growing evidence of misuse, including threats, abuse, bullying, racism, harassment and defamation. There have also been examples of the use of these websites to "groom" impressionable young people.

Material placed on these websites is in the public domain and anything pupils write about themselves or others, however genuinely intended, may harm reputations, or be potentially dangerous, or be regretted later for other reasons. The aims of this policy are therefore to advise and warn pupils (and their parents) of the risks as well as the benefits of the use of these websites and to bring misuse, should it ever occur whether at School or at home, into the School's disciplinary framework.

The following points should therefore be noted and adhered to:

- The School's computer systems must not be used to establish web pages on any+ interactive social networking sites or other websites of a kind described above.
- The **Junior and Middle Divisions are not allowed to** use Facebook during the School day. You are reminded that the School day begins at 8am and goes through to 6pm. **6TH Form** are allowed to use Facebook **during Lunchtimes** but not during Study. Boarders are able to use Facebook at the specified times as set out by the Head of Boarding.
- Pupils will be held personally responsible for all material they have placed on any website and for all material that appears on a website of which they are the host or account holder. Material of a threatening, abusive, bullying, racist, extreme, or defamatory nature, whether placed during or outside School time (including the holidays) will be treated as a serious breach of the Beechwood Code. Extreme or repeated cases of misuse, shown to have breached the Beechwood Code, the Anti Bullying Policy, the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, or the Safeguarding Policy, may lead to temporary or permanent exclusion from the School and the involvement of external agencies such as the Police.
- The School will investigate any complaint arising from the use of these websites and any gossip or rumour about the School or a member of the School community which may appear on them. To do so, the School reserves the right to use inspection software to view web pages. **Pupils are reminded that their computer activity is routinely monitored and the School reserves the right to follow up misuse or causes for concern.**
- Pupils should regard it as their responsibility to report all misuse of networking websites of which they become aware.

Reviewed DHM January 2018, to be reviewed January 2019