



## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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Author:	Sarah Bloor
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Signed by Chair of Directors \_\_\_\_\_

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## INSPIRED LEARNING MULTI ACADEMY TRUST SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

CONTENTS	PAGE
1. Introduction	2
2. Scope	2
3. Legal Framework	2
4. Related Policies	3
5. Principles – be professional, responsible and respectful	4
6. Personal use of Social Media Staff	4
7. Personal use of Social Media Pupils	5
8. Personal use of Social Media Parents	7
7. Using Social Media on behalf of <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust</a>	8
8. Monitoring of internet use	8
9. Breaches of policy	8
Appendix A:	
Requirements for creating Social Media sites for <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust</a>	10
Appendix B:	
Social Media Site Creation Approval Form	14

### I. INTRODUCTION

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example 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 for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the Trust decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school and [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) are safeguarded.

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

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#), its Directors, Members, Local Governing bodies, all teaching and other staff, whether employed by the [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) or external contractors providing services on behalf of the schools or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#), teacher trainees and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the schools. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school (see sections 5, 6, 7 and Appendices A and B).

This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, MySpace), blogs, mircoblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr, Instagram and YouTube. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

## 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

[Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the schools are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- the Human Rights Act 1998;
- Common law duty of confidentiality, and;
- the Data Protection Act 1998.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998;
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality;
- School or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information;
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and;
- Politically sensitive information.

Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843;
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994;
- Malicious Communications Act 1998;
- Communications Act 2003, and;
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

[Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) liable to the injured party.

#### 4. RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) policies:

- [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) Conduct for Employees;
- [Disciplinary & Dismissal](#)
- [IT Acceptable Use Policy](#)

#### 5. PRINCIPLES – BE PROFESSIONAL, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL

You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) and your personal interests.

You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) into disrepute.

You must not represent your personal views as those of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) on any social medium.

You must not discuss personal information about pupils or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) staff and other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media.

You 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 the [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#).

You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#).

## 6. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA - STAFF

Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) or for the schools in which they work in their personal webpage. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and the [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.

Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any current pupil or passed pupil currently in the education system whether from [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) or any other school, unless the pupils are family members.

[Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

If staff members wish to communicate with pupils through social media sites or to enable pupils to keep in touch with one another, they can only do so with the approval of the school and through official school sites created according to the requirements specified in section 7 and Appendix A.

Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils they receive in their personal social media accounts. Instead, if they receive such requests from pupils who are not family members, they must discuss these in general terms in class and signpost pupils to become 'friends' of the official school site.

On leaving [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)'s service, staff members must not contact [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)'s pupils by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) staff and other parties and school or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) corporate information must not be discussed on their personal webpage.

Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members wearing [school](#) uniforms or clothing with school or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) logos or images identifying sensitive school or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) premises must not be published on personal webpage.

[School](#) or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias 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.

[School](#) or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) corporate, service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal webspace.

[Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) only permits limited personal use of social media while at work. Access to social media sites for personal reasons is not allowed during school hours, with the exception of lunch times and break times. However, staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties and, in practice, personal use of the internet should not be on the school's time.

Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. 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.

## 7. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – PUPIL

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is: [http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show\\_form=underage](http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage)

No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day

Any pupil's with mobile phones must be hand them into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off. Failure to follow this guidance will result in a total ban for the student using a mobile phone

No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.

No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.

Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.

Pupils should report any improper contact or cyber bullying to a grown up at home or to their class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and text from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.

A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is the tricky one. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the schools recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.

Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy.

If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment

This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

## 8. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – PARENTS

Inspired learning Multi Academy Trust recognise that many parents and other family members will have social networking accounts which they might using to discuss/share view about school issues with friends and acquaintances.

However it is not the way to raise concerns or complaints as the schools will not respond to the issues raised on social networking sites. If there are any serious allegations being made/concerns being raised, social media or internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments.

Although social networking sites may appear the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust or the schools and those associated with it, it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels such as a private and confidential discussion with the Teacher, Headteacher, Director, Member of Governor, or using the formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (this list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Naming children or posting any comments about children who attend a Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust school
- Making an allegation about staff or anyone else connected with the school.
- Making any post that could be deemed to be cyber bullying
- Making complaints about the school or the staff at the school
- Making defamatory statements about the school or the staff at the school
- Posting negative or offensive comments about staff or any other individual connected to the school.
- Posting protected characteristics
- Posting comments which threaten violence

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and MSN. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of writing this policy the direct link for this is: [http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show\\_form=underage](http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage)

Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step the Trust schools will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve it and ask the relevant information to be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust considers inappropriate the school will consider taking the following action:

- Seek legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this,
- Set out the school's concerns to the parent in writing, giving a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed
- Contact the police where the school feels it appropriate, for example if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene, grossly offensive or is threatening violence.
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum
- Contact the host/provider of the social networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for the removal of the information
- Take other legal action against the individual following appropriate advice.



## 9. USING SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHALF OF [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)

Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another.

There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with pupils or others. Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.

Official school sites must be created only according to the requirements specified in Appendix A of this Policy. Sites created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements.

Staff members must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

## 10. MONITORING OF INTERNET USE

[Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

Users of [school](#) or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

## 11. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of school or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) or any illegal acts or acts that render schools and [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal of staff or legal action against parents or pupils.

Contracted providers of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) services must inform the relevant schools 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 [schools](#) and [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#). Any action against breaches should be according to contractors' internal disciplinary procedures.

## APPENDIX A

Requirements for creating social media sites on behalf of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)

### CREATION OF SITES

Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#).

Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purposes for using social media and whether the overall investment is likely to be worthwhile for achieving the proposed pedagogical outcome.

The proposed audience and level of interactive engagement with the site, for example whether pupils, school staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the site, must be discussed with the school's [Headteachers](#).

Staff members must consider how much time and effort they are willing to commit to the proposed site. They should be aware that maintaining a site is not a one-off task, but involves a considerable time commitment.

The headteachers must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the site refreshed and relevant. It is important that enough staff members are trained and are able to maintain and moderate a site in case of staff absences or turnover.

There must be a careful exit strategy and a clear plan from the outset about how long the site will last. It must not be neglected, creating a potential risk to the school's brand and image.

Consideration must also be given to how the success of the site will be evaluated to assess whether the site has achieved the proposed objectives.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When creating social media sites for children and young people and communicating with them using such sites, staff members must at all times be conscious of their responsibilities; staff must always act in the best interests of children and young people.

When creating sites for children and young people, staff members must be alert to the risks to which young people can be exposed. Young people's technical knowledge may far exceed their social skills and awareness – they may post sensitive personal information about themselves, treat online 'friends' as real friends, be targets for 'grooming' or become victims of cyberbullying.

If children and young people disclose information or display behaviour or are exposed to information or behaviour on these sites that raises safeguarding or other concerns, appropriate authorities must be informed immediately. Failure to do so could expose vulnerable young people to risk of harm.

Staff members must ensure that the sites they create or contribute to for work purposes conform to the *Good Practice Guidance for the Providers of Social Networking and Other User Interactive Services* (Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, 2008).

Staff members must also ensure that the webspace they create on third party sites comply with the site owner's minimum age requirements (this is often set at 13 years). Staff members must also consider the ramifications and possibilities of children under the minimum age gaining access to the site.

Care must be taken to ensure that content is suitable for the target age group and contributors or 'friends' to the site are vetted.

Careful thought must be given to the profile of young people when considering creating sites for them. For example, the internet may not be the best medium to communicate with vulnerable young people (or indeed any age group) receiving confidential and sensitive services from the schools or Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust. It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, particularly on third-party-hosted sites such as social networking

sites, where privacy settings may not be strong enough to prevent breaches of confidentiality, however inadvertent. If in doubt, you must seek advice from your [Headteachers](#)

## APPROVAL FOR CREATION OF OR PARTICIPATION IN WEBSITE

[Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) social media sites can be created only by or on behalf of the school. Site administrators and moderators must be [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) employees or other authorised people.

Approval for creation of sites for work purposes, whether hosted by the school or hosted by a third party such as a social networking site, must be obtained from the [school's Headteacher](#).

Approval for participating, on behalf of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#), on sites created by third parties must be obtained from the school's [Headteacher](#).

Content contributed to own or third-party hosted sites must be discussed with and approved by the [school's Headteacher](#).

The school's [Headteacher](#) must be consulted about the purpose of the proposed site and its content. In addition, the [Headteacher's](#) approval must be obtained for the use of the school logo and brand.

Staff must complete the Social Media Site Creation Approval Form (Appendix B) and forward it to the school's [Headteacher](#) before site creation.

Be aware that the content or site may attract media attention. All media enquiries must be forwarded to the school's [headteacher](#) immediately. Staff members must not communicate with the media without the advice or approval of the [headteacher](#).

## CONTENT OF WEBSITE

[School](#) hosted sites must have clearly expressed and publicised Terms of Use and House Rules. Third-party hosted sites used for work purposes must have Terms of Use and House Rules that conform to the school or [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) standards of professional conduct and service.

Staff members must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of [the schools](#) or the [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) without authorisation.

Information provided must be worthwhile and accurate; remember what is published on the site will reflect on the school's or the [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust's](#) image, reputation and services.

Stay within the law and be aware that child protection, privacy, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright law may apply to the content of social media.

Staff members must respect their audience and be sensitive in the tone of language used and when discussing topics that others may find controversial or objectionable.

Permission must be sought from the relevant people before citing or referencing their work or referencing service providers, partners or other agencies.

[School](#) hosted sites must always include the school logo or brand to ensure transparency and confidence in the site. The logo should, where possible, link back to the relevant page on the school website.

Staff members participating in [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)-hosted or other approved sites must identify who they are. They must disclose their positions within the school on these sites.

Staff members must never give out their personal information such as home contact details or home email addresses on these sites.

Personal opinions should not be expressed on official sites.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND MODERATION OF CONTENT

Careful consideration must be given to the level of engagement of contributors – for example whether users will be able to add their own text or comments or upload images.

Sites created for and contributed to by pupils must have the strongest privacy settings to prevent breaches of confidentiality. Pupils and other participants in sites must not be able to be identified.

The content and postings in [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)-hosted sites must be moderated. Moderation is the responsibility of the team that sets up or initiates the site.

The team must designate at least two approved Administrators whose role it is to review and moderate the content, including not posting or removal of comments which breach the Terms of Use and House Rules. It is important that there are enough approved moderators to provide cover during leave and absences so that the site continues to be moderated.

For third-party-hosted sites such as social networking sites used for work purposes, the responsibility for protection and intervention lies first with the host site itself. However, different sites may have different models of intervention and it is ultimately the responsibility of the staff member creating the site to plan for and implement additional intervention, for example in the case of content raising child safeguarding concerns or comments likely to cause offence.

Behaviour likely to cause extreme offence, for example racist or homophobic insults, or likely to put a young person or adult at risk of harm must never be tolerated. Such comments must never be posted or removed immediately and appropriate authorities, for example the Police or Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), informed in the case of illegal content or behaviour.

Individuals wishing to be 'friends' on a site must be checked carefully before they are approved. Their comments must be reviewed regularly and any that do not comply with

the House Rules must not be posted or removed. [NOTE: the school must amend this statement in line with their own rules. The safer alternative for schools is not to allow any outsiders to become friends of the site and to limit the site to known people only, in the case of adults, those who have undergone appropriate security checks.](#)

Any proposal to use social media to advertise for contributors to sites must be approved by the school's [Headteacher](#).

Approval must also be obtained from the school's [Headteacher](#) to make an external organisation a 'friend' of the site.

## APPENDIX B

### [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#)

#### Social Media Site Creation Approval Form

Use of social media on behalf of [Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust](#) must be approved prior to setting up sites.

Please complete this form and forward it to the school's [Headteachers](#)

<b>TEAM DETAILS</b>	
Department	
Name of author of site	

Author's line manager	
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site
What are the aims you propose to achieve by setting up this site?  What is the propose content of this site?	
<b>PROPOSED AUDIENCES</b>	Who are the proposed audiences of the site? (please tick all that apply)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust (provide age range)</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust</a> staff <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Pupils from other schools (provide names of schools)</a> <input type="checkbox"/> External organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public <input type="checkbox"/> Others; please provide details
<b>PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORS</b>	Who are the proposed contributors to the site? (please tick all that apply)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust (provide age range)</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust</a> staff <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Pupils from other schools (provide names of schools)</a> <input type="checkbox"/> External organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public

	<input type="checkbox"/> Others; please provide details
<b>ADMINISTRATION OF THE SITE</b>	
Names of administrators (the site must have at least 2 approved administrators)	
Names of moderators (the site must have at least 2 approved moderators)	
Who will vet external contributors?	
Who will host the site?	<input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Inspired Learning Multi Academy Trust</a> <input type="checkbox"/> Third party: please give host name:
Proposed date of going live	
Proposed date for site closure	
How do you propose to advertise for external contributors?	
If contributors include children or adults with learning disabilities how do you propose to inform and obtain consent of parents or responsible adults?	
What security measures will you take to prevent unwanted or unsuitable individuals from contributing or	



becoming 'friends' of the site?	
<b>APPROVAL</b>	Approval from relevant people must be obtained before the site can be created. The relevant managers must read this form and complete the information below before final approval can be given by the headteacher.
<u>Line Manager</u> I approve the aims and content of the proposed site.	Name:  Signature:  Date:
<u>Communications Manager</u> I approve the aims and content of the proposed site and the use of the school brand and logo.	Name:  Signature:  Date:
<u>Headteacher</u>	Name:  Signature:  Date: