



SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY FOR STAFF

FOR USE BY NETWORK RYDE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy is designed to be read in conjunction with the Ryde Town Council Social Media Policy

This document has been developed to ensure staff at Network Ryde are aware of their professional responsibilities when using ICT equipment, systems and communicating with young people & adults. All staff must follow the guidelines at all times. Individual staff are responsible for their own behaviour and actions when carrying out any activity which involves the use of Network Ryde's equipment, information systems and social media channels, along with use of their own devices either within Network Ryde or at other locations, such as home or outdoor sessions.

The most popular social networks are web-based, commercial, and not purposely designed for educational use. Network Ryde have the following social media account – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with the user name of Network Ryde.

For individuals, social networking sites provide tremendous potential opportunities for staying in touch with friends and family. Other educational networking sites are also growing in use. These sites are usually restricted to only certain users and not available to the general public. Examples of these types of sites include Facebook, Twitter, professional online communities, blogging sites and online applications such as Google Apps for Education.

As staff who work with children and young people, we have a professional image to uphold, how we conduct ourselves online both at Network Ryde and in our personal lives helps support this image. As reported recently by the media, there have been instances of teachers or other professionals who have worked with children and young people demonstrating professional misconduct. This has included engaging in inappropriate dialogue about their schools and/or young people who use their service or posting pictures/videos of themselves engaged in inappropriate activity.

Some staff feel that being online shields them from having their personal lives examined. But increasingly, professionals' online identities are put into the public domain this can cause serious repercussions. One of the main features of social networks is the ability to "friends request" others.

Network Ryde staff are not allowed to accept invitations to 'friend' or 'follow' young people who attend Network Ryde within these social networking sites from their personal social media accounts. When young people gain access into a professional's network of friends and acquaintances and are able to view personal photos, the dynamic is altered, and the young person may have a different view of the professional that may affect the working relationship. If you already have an existing friendship with a young person due to being either family or family friends you will need to declare that in your supervision with your line manager.

Friend-ing / following young people provides these young people more information than one should share in a setting. It is important to maintain a professional relationship with young people to avoid relationships that could be inappropriate on one or more levels. This could also be the case with young people who have moved on from using Network Ryde. The potential for these young people to still have acquaintances with whom they could share personal information about the member of staff which would put the member of staff or other young people at risk is high.

For the protection of your professional reputation and to ensure that safeguarding protocols are maintained, we would expect Network Ryde staff to adopt the following practices:

- Do not accept young people as friends / followers on personal social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Tiktok. Decline any student-initiated friend / follow requests. If you have concerns with a young person requesting to follow/friend you please speak to the Youth Work Manager.
- Do not initiate digital friendships with young people
- Remember that people classified as "friends" or "followers" have the ability to download and share your information with others.
- Do not post any content that could be deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
- Weigh whether a particular posting puts your effectiveness as a professional at risk.

- Post only what you want the world to see. Imagine your young people, their parents or your line manager visiting your site. It is not like posting something to your website or blog and then realising that a story or photo should be taken down. On a social networking site, once you post something it may be available, even after it is removed from the site.
- Do not discuss young people or colleagues or publicly criticise Network Ryde, Ryde Town Council and their policies or personnel.
- Do not post images that include young people and do not take any photographs of young people on personal mobile phones or mobile devices.
- If you are replying to a post on Network Ryde's social media accounts, you must do this from the Network Ryde account not your personal social media account.

Security

- Visit your profile security and privacy settings. At a minimum, Network Ryde staff should have all privacy settings set to “only friends” or “followers”. “Friends of friends” and “Networks and Friends”. You must set the privacy levels correctly as you and your family may be a risk from people you do not know looking at you, your home and your children.
- Due to security risks, be cautious when installing the external applications that work with the social networking site. Examples of these sites are calendar programs and games.
- Run updated malware protection to avoid infections of spyware and adware that social networking sites might place on your computer.
- Be careful not to fall for phishing scams that arrive via email or on your social network site, providing a link for you to click, leading to a fake login page.

If you require further information, please ensure you seek guidance from the Youth Work Manager or PC Consultants. It is important that all staff recognize the consequences of inappropriate use of social networking sites. These might include:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Referral to External Agencies, including the Police and the LADO

There are many social networking services available; Network Ryde is fully supportive of social networking as a tool to engage and collaborate with young people, and to engage with parents and the wider community.

Staff have access to all of Network Ryde's social media accounts and through this account alone, will be how the staff contact young people and parents. The use of personal accounts to reply to messages, comments or any other form of communication will result in a disciplinary as that contact cannot be monitored by the Youth Work Manager. If someone is to message a staff members personal social media, that staff member is to report it to the Youth Work Manager and answer via the Network Ryde pages.

When using the Social Media for professional or private reasons, I have read, understood and will comply with the following statements:

1. I will be cautious when talking about my professional role when using personal social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, or any other online publishing websites.
2. I will ensure that any posts I make on websites, social media or via electronic communication, will not damage the reputation of Network Ryde or Ryde Town Council.
3. I must not use my personal social media accounts to communicate with current or former attendees of Network Ryde if they are still under the age of 18 and have not accessed Network Ryde for at least 2 years.
4. If I am personal friends with parents of someone who attends Network Ryde, I will not use my personal social media accounts to discuss or post information about our service or my professional role.
5. I will set and maintain my profile on Social Media with privacy settings, giving access to known friends only.
6. If the Network Ryde team experience any derogatory or slanderous comments relating to Network Ryde, Ryde Town Council, colleagues or my professional status, Screenshots will be taken for evidence and escalate the information to the Youth Services Manager or Town Clerk.

Personal Mobile Phones and Devices. When using personal mobile phones and devices:

1. All mobile phones and any other personally owned devices are to be switched off or switched to 'silent' mode during sessions. And will only be accessed in emergency situations or to check due to childcare / homecare arrangements.

2. Contact to any young person or parent must be via a Network Ryde device or through the social media accounts video calling facility.

3. Personally owned mobile devices will not be used to take digital images, video or sound recordings of young people. If you do not have a Network Ryde device please use the digital camera for images of young people.

Cyber bullying:

It is also important to remember that bullying can take place in different ways e.g Cyberbullying' via mobile phones or online.

Our PC's & iPads are within clear view of the Youth Workers when they are being used, although what happens via young people's personal devices can make it difficult to see and understand. If a young person approaches the Network Ryde team about feeling uncomfortable or being bullied / reporting someone else being bullied it will always be followed up. The team will ensure all parties are spoken to properly and most importantly in a professional, sensitive way to try and de-escalate the situation.

If necessary, the young people's school and / or parents may be contacted if we feel the young people are not safe or pose a threat to themselves or other people.

We also encourage the young people to ensure once they are finished using our devices they log off from their account before leaving the premises.