



Social Media Policy

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1. Purpose and Scope

This policy aims to:

- Set clear guidelines and rules on the use of official school social media channels.
- Establish transparent expectations for how all members of the school community (staff, governors, parents/carers, and pupils) engage online.
- Support and align with statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and local safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure all social media activity protects the safety, wellbeing, and reputation of pupils, staff, and the wider school community.

Applicability

This policy applies to the use of social media for both professional (school-related) and personal purposes, whether during working/school hours or otherwise. It applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using:

- School IT facilities, networks, and equipment.
- Personal devices belonging to staff, governors, pupils, or visitors.
- Any other internet-enabled device on or off school premises.

All members of the school community must ensure that information shared online complies with legislation covering copyright, data protection, privacy, defamation, equality, and safeguarding. Everyone must operate in line with the school's related policies, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety & ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Staff Code of Conduct / Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy & Privacy Notices
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Equality Policies

Age Restriction Policy

It remains the school's firm position to actively discourage pupils from using age-restricted social media platforms. Most major social media platforms require users to be at least 13 years old. The school educates pupils on online safety and digital citizenship as part of the computing and PSHE curriculum.

Definition of Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media refers to any online platform, service, or technology that enables interactive communication, content creation, and sharing of media (text, images, audio, video). This includes, but is not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok).
- Video and image sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat).
- Group messaging and chat apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger, Teams).
- Blogs, vlogs, forums, discussion boards, and wikis.
- Live streaming and gaming platforms with chat functions.
- Generative AI tools and platforms where content is shared publicly or interactively.

2. Use of Official School Social Media

Official school social media accounts exist to celebrate pupil achievements, share news, engage with the school community, and promote events.

Authorised Channels & Management

- Official Platforms: Facebook, Instagram
- Account Administrators: Account management is restricted to authorized staff members designated by the Headteacher (e.g., Greg McGill, Helen Woodman, Rob Plumbly). Posting rights include class teachers and teachers that are showcasing their subject.
- Unauthorised staff members must not access, attempt to access, or post content on behalf of official school accounts.

Content Guidelines for Official Accounts

The school WILL post:

- Important alerts, policy updates, and emergency information (e.g., severe weather closures).
- Reminders for upcoming events, class activities, deadlines, and term dates.
- Celebrations of pupil achievements, school events, educational visits, and project work.
- Job vacancies, governor recruitment, and volunteer requests.
- Educational guidance, newsletters, online safety advice, and helpful resources for parents/carers.
- Seasonal and community greetings.

The school WILL NOT post:

- Photos, videos, or full names of pupils without valid, written consent from parents/carers in accordance with UK GDPR.
- Identifiable personal data (e.g., home addresses, phone numbers, birth dates).
- Harmful, abusive, biased, or defamatory comments.
- Political statements or endorsements of commercial enterprises (unless directly linked to school fundraising or official partnerships).
- Direct links or references to personal social media accounts of staff members or pupils.

Moderation and Online Behaviour

School social media channels are monitored regularly by designated administrators. The school will not tolerate:

- Abusive, racist, disablist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or inflammatory comments.
- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation of staff, pupils, or parents/carers.
- Spam, commercial advertising, or unauthorized solicitation.
- Inappropriate sharing of personal information.

Where inappropriate comments or queries are posted, we will address concerns offline where possible, following the school's Complaints Policy. Content violating these standards will be removed, and persistent offenders will be blocked and/or reported to the platform and relevant authorities.

3. Personal Use of Social Media by Staff, Governors, and Volunteers

The school recognises that staff members may use social media in a personal capacity. However, staff, governors, and volunteers must maintain high standards of professional conduct at all times to safeguard pupils and protect reputational integrity.

Expectations & Responsibilities

- **Privacy Settings:** Staff are responsible for maintaining robust privacy and security settings on personal accounts. Privacy settings should not be relied upon as absolute protection, as content can be shared or captured externally.
- **Professional Boundaries:** Staff must maintain clear boundaries between their personal and professional lives.
- **Reporting Safeguarding Concerns:** Staff must immediately report any online safeguarding concerns, cyberbullying, or inappropriate contact involving pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Directives for Staff Personal Social Media Use

Staff **MUST NOT**:

- Use personal social media accounts to conduct school business or communicate with parents/carers or pupils.

- Accept "friend" or "follow" requests from, or communicate with, current or past pupils under the age of 18 on personal accounts.
- Contact past pupils via personal accounts (if ongoing professional contact is necessary, official school channels must be used).
- Express opinions or post content that brings the school into disrepute or undermines its values and professional standing.
- Discuss, criticize, or share confidential information regarding individual pupils, families, colleagues, governors, or school operations.
- Link personal social media profiles to work email addresses.
- Access personal social media accounts during timetabled teaching and care hours (except during designated breaks or in a professional capacity authorized by leadership).
- Post photos or videos taken on school premises, during school trips, or at school events on personal accounts.

4. Personal Use of Social Media by Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in modelling safe, polite, and responsible online behaviour for children.

Guidelines for Parents and Carers

- **Respectful Engagement:** Parents/carers are expected to be respectful toward staff, pupils, and other families when discussing school matters online.
- **Photography at School Events:** Photos or videos taken by parents/carers at school events (e.g., plays, sports days) are for personal family use only and must not be uploaded to social media if they contain images of other children without explicit permission from those children's parents.
- **Addressing Concerns:** Complaints, grievances, or concerns regarding the school, staff, or pupils must be raised through official school channels (e.g., contacting the school office or following the Complaints Policy) rather than aired on social media.

Prohibited Parental Activity

Parents and carers should **NOT** use social media to:

- Post defamatory, derogatory, or abusive comments about staff, pupils, governors, or other parents.
- Publicly air disputes, complaints, or internal school matters.
- Name or identify individual children in relation to behaviour incidents or peer conflicts.

5. Messaging Groups (e.g., Class WhatsApp Groups)

Informal messaging groups set up by parents/carers (such as class WhatsApp groups) can be useful for peer support and logistics. However:

- These groups are independent of the school and are not managed or monitored by school staff.
- Parents/carers using these groups are expected to adhere to the general principles of respect, privacy, and safe conduct outlined in this policy.
- Group administrators and members should discourage gossip, allegations against staff or families, and public complaints within the group. Any formal concerns should always be directed to the school.

6. Monitoring, Security, and Review

- **Systems Monitoring:** The school reserves the right to monitor, intercept, and review activity on its IT equipment, network, and communication systems in line with statutory filtering and monitoring standards (KCSIE) and acceptable use policies.
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be formally reviewed every **two years** (or sooner if required by legislative changes or statutory guidance).