



St Peter & St Paul
CofE Primary School

Social Media Policy
2017 - 2021

(This policy has been drafted having regard for the school's Christian ethos.)

	Date	Signed
Agreed by Staff:	July 2017	Mr Mark Carlyle Head Teacher
Agreed by Governors:	July 2017	Mrs N Ford Chair of Governors
Lead:	Senior Leadership Team/Strategic Leadership Committee	
Review date:	July 2021	

Our School Mission Statement

We see it as our mission to grow the whole child - intellectually, emotionally, physically, socially and spiritually. To provide them, within a Christian environment, with every learning opportunity possible and to empower them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Social Media Policy

Rationale:

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to the school and community and consider our legal responsibilities and the school's reputation.

Social media is useful but can lead us to say things or display items which we regret placing in the public domain.

Working in a school, requires us all to maintain professional boundaries in all forms of communication whether or not it involves electronic/digital technology. This is vital to maintain public trust and appropriate professional relationships with students. Our conduct inside or outside of work should not lead us to blur or cross those professional boundaries.

Our use of social networking applications also has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of good practice for the use of social media which will:

- Safeguard all children
- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected

Definitions and Scope:

This document applies to all staff, including agency/supply staff, volunteers, governors or anyone working within the school. The policy may also apply to former employees in certain circumstances. The use of the word 'individuals' in this document includes this range of people.

This policy applies whether individuals are using their own or the school's equipment; on or off the school premises.

The principles apply to any approved use of social media communication within the school or to personal use of social media outside of school.

Social networking applications covered by this policy include but are not limited to:

- blogs
- online discussion forums
- collaborative spaces
- media sharing services
- public websites
- online gaming environments
- web cameras
- texts
- emails

or any other mediums which enable users to interact, create or exchange information online.

All members of staff should also bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school's Single Equalities, Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, Confidentiality and E-Safety policies.

First Principles:

a) An individual is under a duty to:

- Maintain proper professional boundaries with students, even when students initiate electronic interaction.
- Consider seriously before texting or posting items the public nature of social media and the appropriateness of the item to be communicated; and to have regard for the fact that one may not be able to control who sees the information and how they interpret it once it has been put in the public domain.

b) An individual is under a duty not to:

- Disclose confidential information without express authority especially about students, staff, voluntary or other workers at the school nor breach their right to privacy.
- Engage in posts or activities which are detrimental to maintaining effective working relationships between individuals working at the school.
- Bring the reputation of the school into disrepute.
- Engage in activities which compromise, or might be seen to compromise, the professional standards of teaching or the professional standards applicable to support staff.

- Share information with students in any environment that they would not willingly and appropriately share in a school or school related setting or in the community.
- Post or text comments which incite others to make discriminatory or other professionally unacceptable comments.
- Post school logos or similar images that may lead readers of posts etc to believe the individual is speaking on behalf of the school.

c) Under no circumstances shall any individual engage in any of the following activities as disciplinary action will be taken:

- Bullying and harassment
- Incitement of racial or religious hatred or similar activities
- Texting or posting of libellous statements
- Grooming of students or similar activities to develop an inappropriate relationship(s)
- Compromising of the security of the school's systems
- Breach copyright

General Guidelines:

a) Personal use of Social Media:

- Staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications on any matters related to the school on any social media.
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with parents or pupils on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Head Teacher.

- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account

b) School Sanctioned use of Social Media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the Head Teacher before students are allowed access to the site.
- The content of any school sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to the Head Teacher
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media

- If posting an item about an aspect of the school, for which you have express permission from the Head Teacher, make it clear that any personal views are not necessarily those of the school.

Links to Other School Policies:

This policy should be read in line with the school's Single Equalities, Safeguarding, Anti-bullying, Confidentiality, Mobile Phones and E-Safety policies.

Conclusion:

Social media is a useful means of communication. Because of its ease of access and familiarity, it can lead us to unwittingly overstep the boundaries of professional standards and conduct towards students or work colleagues.

When using social media, individuals should remember that the school is a public body and that we are subject to various standards including the Seven Principles of Public Life per the Nolan Report (Appendix A). We are also subject to professional and school standards relevant to our role in the school.

Period of Review:

This policy shall be reviewed every 4 years.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These principles apply to all aspects of public life.

Document History

Version	Date	Comments
Issue 1	July 2015	
Issue 2	July 2017	