POLICY & PROCEDURE

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Current Policy Approval Date:	Spring 2021
Review Date:	Spring 2024

2 John 1:12

Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

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 our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

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

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks.
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected.
- Safeguard all children.
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school.

Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of staff should 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 Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

Use of Social Media in practice

1. Personal use of social media

School staff must remember that at all times to remain professional in their conduct on social media when referencing the School.

Social Media Policy

- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection (Headteacher or Deputy DSL)
- 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 members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances or events (e.g. school trips) given prior approval by the Headteacher. The use of the school provided email address should be used in this situation.
- 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 account. However, if the post is to raise the profile of an event within the school or answer a direct question, this would be deemed acceptable.
- 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.
- Within the use of school related social media, such as Facebook pages, these pages are not open access to users, they are controlled by Admin (Computing lead, Chair of Governors, PTA chairs only). Posts to pages will be subject to stringent vetting.

2. 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 computing lead or member of the SLT before access is permitted for students.
- 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. The use of first names only if names are necessary.
- 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 a member of SLT.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the About or Info page to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the school website.