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# Social Media Policy

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## Chair of Governors Initials

Social media is just one of the many ways we communicate to our parents, prospective parents, other people in education and our community.

This policy sets out how we will use social media to communicate and what we expect from everyone who follows or talks to us through social media.

We welcome anyone who is interested in the life of our schools to follow us and connect with us on the social media sites that we use, for example: Twitter and LinkedIn for our professional services. Such sites allow more detail about day-to-day life in our schools to be communicated.

Social media may also be used to keep parents informed - during an event, in the case of bad weather or if there is an emergency in the school or local area. It will not be the only way we communicate in an emergency.

**UNCRC Article 13 (Freedom of expression):** Children have the right to get and share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or others. In exercising the right to freedom of expression, children have the responsibility to also respect the rights, freedoms and reputations of others. The freedom of expression includes the right to share information in any way they choose, including by talking, drawing or writing

**Article 16 (Right to privacy):** Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

### Use of social media sites

It's important for everybody's safety that we are clear about how we use these sites and what is acceptable behaviour from the people who choose to follow us. We use our social media sites to publish information that is of general interest. We do not believe it is an appropriate place to discuss personal matters that are specific to individual members of our community, whether that be children, parents, staff or governors.

### Privacy

- We will not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers
- We will not identify by full name any of the children featured in photographs
- We will not allow personal information to be published about children, staff, parents or governors
- We will not publish any professional or personal email addresses or phone numbers. We will use the main school addresses only
- The views expressed in our school posts will be general, not personal views
- Staff must never communicate with pupils via their personal social networking accounts
- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' or 'followers' into their personal accounts or provide them with personal contact information e.g. personal email addresses
- Staff are advised to protect their professional reputation by ensuring their personal accounts are used in an appropriate manner e.g. setting privacy settings accordingly
- Parents are advised not to request to add staff members as 'friends' or 'followers' to their accounts
- Parents must not post pictures of pupils (other than their own children), staff or governors, whilst engaged in school activities, on social networking sites

### Respect

- Respect is at the heart of our community
- We will not tolerate any form of bullying on our social media accounts
- We will not allow posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters between the school and members of its community
- We will not tolerate any comments or posts that are defamatory, rude or abusive towards the school or any member of our school community, whether that be children, parents, staff or governors
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites

## **Our rules**

- Where appropriate, we welcome comments, replies, retweets on the information we post. However, we reserve the right to delete comments and ban further comments from anyone who breaks the terms of our policy
- We will ban and report anyone who breaks the terms of service of the relevant social media platform
- Only an agreed group of members of staff will post on our sites on behalf of the schools

## **Online Bullying/Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Sites**

- Inappropriate use of social media should be reported to the Head of School in the first instance; this may result in disciplinary or police action
- In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent, asking them to remove such comments.
- The Governing Body understands that, “There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged”. “Furthermore, laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:
  - Expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
  - Cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
  - Lower (an individual’s) standing in the estimation of right thinking members of society or
  - Disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession”

### *National Association of Head teachers*

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy can not cover all eventualities or emerging forms of social networking. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the standards outlined in this document. The federation will seek advice or support from outside agencies, as required.