

St John Fisher RC Primary School

Social Media Policy



Head Teacher: Ms J Kenna

Agreed: April 2020

St. John Fisher Social Media Policy

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

St. John Fisher RC Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media (at an age appropriate level). However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by St. John Fisher RC Primary School its staff, parents, carers, governors and pupils.

Scope

This policy is subject to the school's Code of Conduct, Online Safety Policy and Acceptable User Agreements.

This policy:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education.
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

The school respects privacy and understands that staff, governors and parents may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Children in primary schools are below the minimum age to be registered on the following social media platforms: WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn and as such should not be active or posting on such platforms.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Head teacher and senior leaders**
 - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
 - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
 - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
 - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
 - Approve account creation
- **Administrator / Moderator**
 - Create the account following SLT approval
 - Store account details, including passwords securely
 - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
 - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)
- **Staff**
 - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
 - Attending appropriate training
 - Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts (authorised staff only)
 - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a school Twitter account, or a “Friends of the school” Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the Head teacher and Senior Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this

policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

School social media accounts are monitored regularly and frequently. School social media accounts are for information. School will not engage in communications via social media accounts such as Twitter. Regular monitoring is essential in case a situation arises where inappropriate posts or comments are made on a school social media account.

Behaviour

School and staff:

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must refer straight to the Headteacher/ SLT who will consult with Local Authority Media teams. Staff must not comment or respond to any such comments.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites in teachers own time and in safe, secure and appropriate locations. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images agreement. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

- **Staff**
 - Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
 - Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.
- **Pupil/Students**
 - Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.
 - The school's education programme should educate the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media when they reach the appropriate age to use such platforms.
 - **Children in primary schools are below the minimum age to be registered on the following social media platforms: WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn and as such should not be active or posting on such platforms.**
- **Parents/Carers**
 - Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media via this policy (in particular when their child joins the school), the school website, letter and school newsletters.
 - Parents/carers are asked not to post images (photos and videos) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the express permission of parents of other children pictured.
 - Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, the parent/carer will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
 - Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.
 - In the event that a parent/carer posts comments that contravene the expectations the policy and are unwilling to remove these on verbal request the following procedure will follow:
School will:
 - Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
 - Set out the school's concerns to you in writing, giving the parent/carer a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
 - Contact the police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
 - If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;

- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- “Nothing” on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don’t use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do’s

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content (SCHOOL)
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to ‘share’ other peoples’ materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Use school social media to report information only – not to exchange information with any parties including responding to comments made to school posts
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school’s reporting process

The Don’ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Acknowledgements

Policy based on exemplar material as written, produced and owned by SWGfL (onlinesafety@swgfl.org.uk)

© South West Grid for Learning Trust Ltd 2018