


<b>SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY</b>	
DATE OF REVIEW: Autumn 2024	
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW : Autumn 2026	
TO BE REVIEWED BY : Resources Committee	

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 by sharing information, knowledge, opinions and interests online. However many online games, for example Minecraft, and video sharing platforms such as YouTube/Tik Tok have social media elements to them.

Hatherleigh Community Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils are encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. 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 the school, its staff, governors, parents, carers and children.

### **Scope**

This policy is subject to the school's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

- 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 and pupils 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 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. Digital communications with pupils are also considered, staff may not use social media to communicate with learners unless it is via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **SLT**

- Facilitate training and guidance on Social Media use.
- Develop and implement the Social Media policy
- Take a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
- Make an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involve appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
- Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
- Approve any school account creation

### **Administrator /School Business Manager**

- 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**

School employees are encouraged to use IT systems to enhance their work and learning opportunities for children. They must be responsible users and accept that anything that they post online at school or home can affect the reputation of the school.

- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attend appropriate training
- Regularly monitor, update and manage content he/she has posted via school accounts
- Add an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school
- Participation in a public forum must be professional. When participating in a public forum as a private individual, staff should use their personal email.
- Must not respond to negative comments posted online but refer to their line manager.

### **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 history department Twitter account, or a "Friends of the school" Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the School 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 accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

### **Behaviour**

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, governors and families 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.
- 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.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media, staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- 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 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 GDPR laws, or breach confidentiality.

## **Handling abuse**

When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.

If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken

If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

## **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 policy. 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.

## **Personal use**

### **Staff**

Personal communications are those made via 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.

### **Pupils**

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils of the school on any personal social media network account.
- The school's education programme enables the pupils to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- Pupils are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy.

### **Parents/Carers**

- If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
- The school aims to educate and support the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the school website and in newsletters.
- 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/carers to

remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

### **Monitoring posts about the school**

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to proactively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school. The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Linked school policies:

- ICT and computing
- Acceptable use policies
- Data protection
- GDPR
- Conduct
- Behaviour
- Safer Working Practice

### **Appendix 1 Managing your Personal Use of Social Media:**

*Remember -nothing on social media is truly private.*

*Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Check your settings regularly and test your privacy*

#### **Do**

- ✓ *Check with a Senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school*
- ✓ *Keep an eye on your digital footprint and regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to*
- ✓ *Keep your personal information private*
- ✓ *Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views*
- ✓ *Make it clear who is posting content*
- ✓ *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*
- ✓ *Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion*
- ✓ *Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process*
- ✓ *Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible*
- ✓ *Know how to report a problem*

#### **Don't**

- X *Make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute*
- X *Publish confidential or commercially sensitive material*
- X *Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts*
- X *Breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation*
- X *Link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content*

*X Post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content*

*X Use social media to air internal grievances*

**This policy is based on a template provided for schools by SWGFL ([onlinesafety@swgfl.org.uk](mailto:onlinesafety@swgfl.org.uk))**

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

I CONFIRM THAT I HAVE READ AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE GUIDANCE LAID OUT IN THE SCHOOL'S SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

SIGNED:

DATED:

NAME:

(PLEASE PRINT)