



**Policy: Social Media**

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## **Statement of Intent**

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. West Kirby Primary School understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at West Kirby Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- DfE (2018) 'Data protection: a tool kit for schools'
- The Data Protection Act 2018

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and documents:

- Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents
- Acceptable use of ICT
- Digital Awareness Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines **social media** as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as X(Twitter)

For the purpose of this policy, **cyber bullying** is defined as any social media or communication technology intentionally used to bully an individual or group, including the posting or sharing of messages, images or videos.

For the purpose of this policy, **members of the school community** are defined as any teacher, member of support staff, pupil, parent of a pupil, governor or ex-pupil.

### **There are five key areas:**

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school
- B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity
- C. Comments posted by parents/carers
- D. Dealing with incidents of cyber bullying and harassment
- E. The use of social networking sites by the school and PTA

### **A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school**

The school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.

Social Media sites that may be used in school include blogging sites (Purple Mash to Blog/Primary blogger) and X. Parents will give permission for children to access these sites in school as well as permission for images of their child / child's work to be included on the site (see Appendix 1).

The DSL (Mrs E Bailey - Headteacher) has overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place; she is supported by appropriately trained deputies (Mrs T McCann, Mr M Procter & Mrs H Catt) and liaises with other staff as appropriate, but this responsibility cannot be delegated.

DSL and Deputy DSLs have evidence that they have accessed appropriate training and/or support to ensure they understand the unique risks associated with online safety, can recognise the additional risks learners with SEN and disabilities (SEND) face online, and have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe online.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two.

### **B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity**

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

All staff, including governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety at induction. This amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

Guidelines are issued to staff

- Staff must never add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past under 19 years of age, any 'looked after child' under the age of 21 years of age, and any young person with special educational needs under the age of 24 years of age).

- Staff must not knowingly have personal contact with current or ex-pupils, or other children or young people where there is a relationship developed as part of their 'professional' role, e.g. music tutor, on any social media.
- Staff are strongly advised not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff must not contact parents or carers (or respond to them) on personal social media sites to discuss school issues.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff must not use personal communication media, e.g. email or mobile phone, for contact with pupils.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People.'
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Online safety is addressed as part of regular (at least annual) child protection training and staff receive updates, as appropriate.

### **C. Comments posted by Parents/Carers**

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking through the schools Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers (see Appendix 2).

Methods of school communication include the website, newsletters, letters, X (Twitter) and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion.

Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

- Parents/Carers must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Parents/Carers should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

### **D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites**

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll. In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents/Carers, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send a letter.

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 Headteachers)

Children are taught about online safety, including as part of statutory Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE), we recognise that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate, and a more personalised or contextualised approach for more vulnerable children e.g., victims of abuse and SEND, may be needed.

We endeavour to do all that we reasonably can to limit children's exposure to risks from the school's IT system and we ensure that we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness. Our leadership team and relevant staff have an awareness and understanding of the filtering and monitoring provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns identified. When making filtering and monitoring decisions, we consider those who are 'potentially at greater risk of harm' and how often they access the IT system along with the proportionality of costs versus safeguarding risks.

WKPS recognise that child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur online. We acknowledge that we have an essential role to play in both preventing online child-on-child abuse and responding to any concerns when they occur, even if they take place offsite and we have the CPOMS system in place to support and evidence this.

WKPS ensure their Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and wider safeguarding policies specifically address online safety, especially with regards to appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks, child-on-child abuse, relationships on social media and the use of mobile and smart technology.

WKPS carry out an annual review of their approach to online safety, supported by an annual online safety audit that considers and reflects the specific risks their children face.

### **E. The use of social networking sites by the school and the PTA**

The school's ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. West Kirby Primary School currently have X (Twitter) and a PTA Facebook account. These are intended to promote events being held at school, to provide parents/carers with reminders, and to help build awareness of our school. They are not used to answer queries or to respond to parents. Any queries should be directed through the school office or through key stage email addresses and not through social media channels.

X (Twitter) is run solely by school and a limited number of people have access to the password for it.

The PTA Facebook account is run by trustees of the PTA. School does not access the PTA Facebook account. However, it is expected that the members of the PTA who are running these accounts adhere to our school safeguarding, online safety and social media policies. For example, careful consideration must be given about what is posted, written or shared on these accounts as well as who is followed to ensure that this is appropriate at all times. As a school we can view what is posted on Facebook and will ask for posts/comments to be removed if we deem them to be unsuitable.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher, in conjunction with the Computing Lead and DPO.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is Autumn 2024

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils, parents, carers and governors.

## Appendix 1

### Extracts from School Registration Documents

<b>General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):</b> I consent to my child's information being held along with parent / carer information and for it to be used as detailed in the GDPR Privacy Notice for Pupils and their Families for the benefit of my child's education.		Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>
Signed		
Name		
Date		
Relationship to child		

<b>School photography and video consent:</b>		
I consent to		
Using images of my child in displays in and around school	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Using videos of my child in the classroom during lessons, assemblies and performances	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Using images of my child on the school website and on the school Twitter feed (children are never named)	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Using videos of my child on the school website and on the school Twitter feed (children are never named)	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Using images of my child in school newsletters and school publications which may be emailed to parents	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Using images and videos of my child on the school VLE (the Virtual Learning Environment that only parents and carers can access). The VLE is used for learning at home, for example, during school closures and lockdowns.	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Signed		
Name		
Date		
Relationship to child		
<b>Internet consent:</b> I agree that my child can use the internet under the supervision of the school and in line with the School's E-safety Policy.		Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>
Signed		
Name		
Date		
Relationship to child		

## Appendix 2

# Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents & Carers



### Statement of Intent

West Kirby Primary School understands the benefits of using social media. However, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as damage to the school's reputation.

This Social Media Code of Conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp.

We ask that parents/carers read this document and ensure that they always act in accordance with the stipulations detailed below.

### Legal Framework

This document has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Defamation Act 2013

This document operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Social Media Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Digital Awareness Policy
- Complaints Procedure Policy

### Digital Awareness and Social Media Conduct

West Kirby Primary School expects Parents & Carers to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting, liking, re-tweeting or sharing defamatory contents about parents/carers, pupils, the school or its employees.
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media.
- Posting, liking, re-tweeting or sharing confidential information, e.g. regarding a complaint outcome.
- Contacting school employees through social media, including requesting to follow them or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff or the school in general.
- If Parents/Carers wish to raise a complaint, the school has a Complaints Procedures Policy in place. Information about this is available on the school website.

- Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution.
- Parents/Carers will not attempt to friend or follow any member of staff on social media.
- Parents/Carers are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.
- The school retains the right to request any damaging material is removed from social media platforms/websites.
- Parent & Carer social media usage will be in accordance with the school's Social Media Policy.

### **Online Messaging**

The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit the school community by keeping it closer.

The school expects parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the school, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents/carers
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents/carers or the school
- Sending abusive messages to any member of staff

If Parents/Carers wish to talk to staff, parents/carers should arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to the school office or using the key stage email addresses.

Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing.

The school can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.

The school's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent teacher association or governing board cause any issues through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

The Headteacher can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

The Headteacher can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

### **Monitoring and Review**

All parents/carers are required to read this code of conduct. The Headteacher will review this code of conduct on an annual basis and will communicate any changes to all staff and parents/carers.

The next scheduled review date for this document is Autumn 2025.