

Social Media Policy

Gwladys Street CP & Nursery School



Approved by:

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1. Overview

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. Some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft, and video sharing platforms, such as You Tube, also have social media elements to them. Gwladys Street Community Primary & Nursery School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, governors, parents, carers, pupils and external visitors 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.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to encourage the safe, responsible and respectful use of social media by Gwladys Street CP & Nursery School and all stakeholders. We aim to encourage the use of social media to support the school's vision and values by establishing a set of rules and regulations that enables all to use social media for the benefit of all stakeholders. Additionally, this document aims to safeguard the school and its employees.

Aims of Using Social Media

Gwladys Street's social media accounts will be used and followed principally by staff, parents and other professionals in order to advertise the excellent work by staff, pupils, parents and governors and to celebrate the success and achievements of the children. Similarly, it will also contain information detailing special events in school. The aim of this is to run alongside more traditional methods like sending home letters, the website and text service. Social media accounts (such as Twitter) will not be used to replace these current systems. Whilst using social media accounts, all staff will demonstrate safe and responsible use.

3. Scope

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

Digital communications with pupils/students are also considered. *Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications*

5. Organisational Control

Roles & Responsibilities

5.1 Governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that our school complies with all relevant data protection obligations.

5.2 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

SLT are responsible for:

- 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

5.3 Administrator / Moderator

Administrators / Moderators are responsible for:

- 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)

5.4 All staff

Staff (class teachers & SLT) are responsible for:

- Knowing 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.

6. Protection of Staff Acting in Good Faith

It is fully recognised that a member of staff may accidentally breach this policy whilst acting in good faith and in the course of their duties as a member of staff of the school. If a member of staff suspects this to be the case, they must notify the headteacher or a member of the SLT immediately so that action can be taken to prevent or minimise damage.

7. Behaviour

Account Users

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.
- Staff will not send private messages on Gwladys Street's social media accounts. Any contact to followers should be made using other methods.
- 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 inform the headteacher or a member of SLT 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 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. 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.

8. Twitter Followers

At present, Gwladys Street's Twitter account is open to all followers. However, we reserve the right to block accounts deemed inappropriate or offensive to ourselves and/ or others. Staff wishing to follow Gwladys Street Community Primary & Nursery School Twitter account may do so as long as their twitter account is secure and private. Under no circumstances should staff members follow parents or students. Professional accounts should be used to advertise the school in a positive light and promote useful information to their followers. In order to protect ourselves from inappropriate

content being distributed into our news feeds, the Gwladys Street Community Primary School account or any professional accounts will not actively seek to follow other users. However, exceptions may be made where following and an '@ handle' has obvious benefits to the school (children's author or an educational account). Only people with a genuine account, and a tick by their name, will be followed. Once again, these will be decided on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the user. The Twitter account should be used more as a distributor of information to those who follow it and not as a receiver of information.

9. Monitoring inappropriate content and referencing

Gwladys Street Community Primary & Nursery School welcomes any referencing, mentions, or interactions that show the school in a positive light only. Therefore, Gwladys Street Community Primary & Nursery School deems any of the following as inappropriate:

- Offensive language or remarks aimed at the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school.
- Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed.
- Images or text that infringe upon copyright.
- Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school.

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. 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.

Any inappropriate content will be deleted and its users will be removed, blocked, and, depending on the nature of the comment, reported to Twitter. Furthermore, incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority.

9. Legal consideration

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.

10. 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. A member of the SLT should be informed as soon as possible.

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.

14. 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*
- *Grammatically correct and punctuated accurately.*

15. Use of Images

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

- All children who have not got permission to have their image feature on the website/social media feed will not be shown but their work could be. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Social media accounts will only use children's first names when referencing children. It will post photos of work and learning.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pupil 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. Pupils should be appropriately dressed and should not be subject to ridicule.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

16. 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.
- Parents, carers and external visitors should not post pictures of pupils other than their own children
- The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- Pupils/students 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
- If damaging or negative comments about the school or staff are posted on social media platforms, it should be reported to the school as soon as possible; any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy and as previously defined within this policy.

While this policy cannot cover independent supporter of the school, i.e. parents, they are encouraged to follow its principles and will be regularly reminded of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking.

16. Reviewing of the policy

This policy will be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary to reflect changes in technology and social media use.

17. Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- * E-Safety and Acceptable Use of ICT Policy;
- * Behaviour Policy.

Appendix 1:

Managing your School Social Media Accounts

- “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 the School Social Media Accounts

The Do’s:

- Check with the Headteacher or a member of SLT before publishing content
- 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 to the Headteacher or a member of the SLT

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