



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Version: 2

St. Catherine's
RC Primary School

Name and Designation of Policy Author(s)	Nina Chwastek, Headteacher Danielle Flood, Computing Lead		Is this a Statutory Document
			No
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Version History

Date	Ver	Author Name and Designation	Summary of Main Changes
September 2017	1	Danielle Flood, Computing Lead Nina Chwastek, Headteacher	New policy, no previous version. Taking into account advice issued by the Department for Education (DfE) including Keeping Children Safe in Education (May 2016). Addition of expectations for new school Facebook account
September 2021	2	Jessica Quiligotti, Deputy Headteacher	Review of policy. No major changes, just minor amendments to wording.

Monitoring Compliance with the Policy

Describe Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Target	How will the KPI be Monitored?	Which Committee will Monitor this KPI?	Frequency of Review	Lead
Social Media policy adhered to by all staff, parents and children	100%	Log of Social Media issues kept and discussed at termly meeting with Safeguarding Governor	FGB	Annual	Safeguarding Governor
The procedures for recording any social media issues are followed robustly	100%	Annual review of all relevant documentation	FGB	Annual	Safeguarding Governor

Mission Statement

Our school community is rooted in the Gospel and the vision of St. Catherine of Siena. This inspires each of us *'To be who God wants us to be and so set the world on fire.'*

- We are called to love one another as we seek to be the best in all that we learn and do.
- We celebrate and nurture the gifts, talents and skills of everyone.
- We commit ourselves to grow together in faith, love and service.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Objectives

St. Catherine's R.C. Primary School recognises that new technologies are an integral and growing part of everyday life and that they make an important contribution to teaching and learning opportunities in school. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways.

A major aim of this policy is to support the school in using this valuable communication tool by providing a framework in which the use of social media should operate.

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.

It is also recognised that in the light of the rapid evolution of social networking technologies, the school requires a robust policy framework so that all adults working in school are aware of the expectations and the rules they are expected to follow when using social media both inside and outside of the school environment.

It is crucial that children are safeguarded and that parents, pupils and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. Responsible use of social media will ensure that the confidentiality and privacy of pupils and members of staff are maintained and that the reputation and integrity of the school is protected.

This document sets out St Catherine's R.C. Primary School's policy on social networking and aims to:

- ensure that all adults use social media responsibly in order to safeguard the school, its pupils, staff, school governors and members of the wider school community
- set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use

- give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils
- ensure that the school is not exposed to legal risks
- make sure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- confirm that users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all adults working in St. Catherine's R.C. Primary School and who provide services for or on behalf of the school including employees (teaching and non-teaching staff), trainee teachers and any other trainees, apprentices, self-employed staff, agency staff, external consultants and volunteers. This policy also applies to school governors.

This policy covers the **personal** use of social media as well as the use of social media for **school purposes** (whether official or not), including the use of websites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

This policy covers the use of social media and also personal blogs and any posts made on other people's blogs and to all on-line forums and notice boards. The guidance, rules and principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the social media platform or medium.

1.3 Definitions

The following definitions apply:

- **social media/networking** – means any type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. Social media includes but is not limited to, online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn and also covers blogs, chat rooms, forums, podcasts and video-image-sharing websites such as YouTube, Flickr, Reddit, Instagram, Pinterest and Tumblr. Some games also have social media elements, for example, Minecraft and World of Warcraft. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all examples of emerging social media in this policy.
- **adults/adults working in school** - means all members of staff (including teaching and non-teaching staff) who work in St. Catherine's R.C. Primary School as an employee or on a self-employed basis. It also includes trainee teachers, other trainees and apprentices, volunteers, agency staff, external consultants and school governors.
- **information** - means all types of information including but not limited to, facts, data, comments, audio, video, photographs, images and any other form of online interaction.
- **inappropriate information** - means information as defined above which any reasonable person would consider to be unsuitable or inappropriate in the circumstances and taking into account the adult's position within the school.

- **the school and the wider school community** - means St. Catherine's R.C. Primary School, its pupils, all adults working in school (as defined above) parents/carers of pupils, former pupils, the Local Authority, the Diocese and any other person or body directly or indirectly connected with St. Catherine's School.

1.4 Principles

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.

Adults have an important role to play in equipping the school's pupils to stay safe online, both in school and outside of school. Adults therefore need to be aware of the risks associated with the use of social media and in particular about the provision and sharing of information in the social media arena.

Adults must not, whether deliberately or inadvertently and whether in their working time or in their personal time, provide, publish or share inappropriate information on or via any social media platform or medium about themselves, the school and the wider school community.

Adults are accountable for and must take responsibility for all information published or shared by them on social media websites and for any views expressed by them on any such sites, whether in their working time or in their personal time and which may come into the public domain. Adults should be aware that their use of social media and any information published by them may be monitored by the Headteacher, members of the school's senior leadership team and/or members of the school's Governing Body.

All adults who provide, publish or share information which causes harm or distress or which has the potential to cause harm or distress or to cause reputational damage to the school and the wider school community will be dealt with as appropriate by the Headteacher in accordance with the relevant school policy/procedure. This may include action being taken under the school's Safeguarding Policy (which could lead to a referral to the Local Authority and/or the police) and it could also lead to disciplinary action being taken under the school's Disciplinary Policy which, in serious cases may lead to dismissal without notice.

The principles which underpin this policy are:

- adults are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- adults must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate; adults must not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work and personal interests;
- adults must work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way;
- adults must continually monitor and review their own practices in terms of the continually evolving world of social networking and social media and ensure that they consistently follow the rules, principles and guidance contained in this policy.

1.5 Organisational Control

The Senior Leadership Team will:

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

The Administrators will:

- Create the account following Senior Leadership Team 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)
- Monitor the **School accounts 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.

Adults working in school will:

- ensure they are familiar with the contents of this policy
- adhere to and apply the rules, guidance and principles in this policy in all aspects of their work and in their personal time
- act in accordance with their duties and responsibilities under this policy and the statutory/ non statutory advice and guidance referred to
- raise any concerns or queries in connection with this policy with the Senior Leadership Team
- attend any training provided or facilitated by the school in relation to the use of the internet or any other communication technologies
- know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- regularly monitor, update and manage content he/she has posted via school accounts
- add an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Process for creating new accounts

In addition to the whole school social media accounts the school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a Phase Twitter account, or a PTA Facebook page. The expectation is that there should be parity between

phases in the use of social media. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the 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 Senior Leadership Team 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.

Section 2: Safer Social Media Practice in Schools

2.1 Expectations

All adults working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of pupils. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their colleagues, pupils, the public in general and all those with whom they work in line with the school's code of conduct. Adults in contact with pupils should therefore understand and be aware that safer practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting. Teachers must at all times be mindful of the Teachers' Standards applicable to their profession and act in accordance with those standards.

The guidance contained within this policy are an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of schools' staff who work with pupils. Anyone whose practice deviates from this document and/or the school code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them.

School staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incidents with this potential.

2.2 Safer online behaviour

Staff must:

- understand how to restrict access to their own details using appropriate privacy settings
- be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for pupils or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties
- review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site
- not enter personal information for example: some social networking sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work. In some circumstances this could damage the reputation of the school, the profession or the Local Authority
- never "friend" a pupil at the school on any social networking site. (The only exceptions to this rule is/are where the pupil is a member of the adult's family provided agreed protocols are followed and the family relationship has been identified to and acknowledged by the Headteacher. If this relationship has not been identified, contact through social networking or social media will be a breach of this policy and therefore will be treated as a serious conduct issue)
- be cautious about any form of social networking contact with former pupils, particularly where siblings or other relatives continue to attend the school or may attend the school in future.
- be cautious about following or being followed by parents/carers of pupils, accepting parents of pupils as friends on Facebook or having contact with parents/carers on any social networking site.
- not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, criticise, abuse or defame pupils, family members of pupils, colleagues, the Headteacher, governors, the school in general and the wider school community. Adults must always show respect to others when using social media
- not use social media to air internal grievance
- never post derogatory remarks or offensive comments on-line or engage in on-line activities which may bring them or the school and the wider school community into disrepute or which could be interpreted as reflecting negatively on their professionalism.
- not represent their personal views on any social media forum as being in any way linked to the school or being the views of the school.
- not publish on personal social media pages photographs, videos or any other types of images of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members or where the school can be identified

- ensure that they do not provide, publish share or otherwise disclose any confidential information about themselves or about the school and the wider school community in breach of their duty of fidelity or in breach of other laws relating to confidentiality and privacy including the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Data Protection Act 1998.

Adults must ensure they understand their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and under the school's Equality and Diversity Policy. Breaches of these through the use of social networking or social media will be considered a serious conduct matter which may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Adults should also be aware that they could be held personally liable for their own discriminatory actions under the Equality Act 2010. If, for example an adult were to harass a co-worker online or engage in a discriminatory act in relation to one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, this may result in legal action being taken against them.

All adults should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Section 3: Guidance and Protection for Pupils

3.1 Keeping Children safe

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from Facebook but this is also applicable to other applications.
- The school will inform the social networking site directly of any pupil is known to hold an account.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day
- Mobile phones should not be brought in to school by pupils, unless the pupil is in Year 6 and is walking home alone from school where a prior arrangement has been made for this. In this case, the phone should be handed in to their class teacher or phase leader at the start of the day and collected from there at the end of the day. The school will not accept liability for the loss of the equipment.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day, other than for school channels (e.g. school Facebook page). Filters are in place to stop this but attempts will be logged and dealt with as per the school monitoring system
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision
- Pupils must report any improper contact or cyber bullying to class teachers in confidence as soon as it happens.

- There is a zero tolerance to cyber bullying - this should be reported to the class teacher in the first instance who will then inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

3.2 Inappropriate Use

If the Headteacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner the Safeguarding Policy and/or Disciplinary Policy will be followed.

3.3 Cyberbullying and Trolling

Cyberbullying can be defined as ‘the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.’

If cyberbullying takes place, adults should keep records of the abuse, texts, e-mails, website or instant messages and should not delete the said texts, e-mails or messages. Adults are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and to be careful to record the time, date and location of the site.

Staff are encouraged to report all incidents of cyberbullying to their line manager or the headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

Trolling can be defined as ‘circumstances where a person sows discord on-line starting arguments or upsetting people by posting inflammatory, insulting or threatening messages with the deliberate intent of provoking an emotional response;’

If trolling occurs, adults are advised to take screen prints of messages and should not delete any evidence of trolling.

Adults must report all incidents of cyberbullying and/or trolling to the Headteacher. Any such incidents will be taken very seriously. Adults who have been subjected to cyberbullying or trolling may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representative.

3.4 The Prevent Duty

Schools have a vital role to play in equipping children and young people to stay safe online, both in and outside school and also in protecting pupils from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities, (including schools) in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the Prevent Duty).

Terrorist organisations, such as ISIL, are attempting to radicalise and recruit young people through extensive use of social media and the internet. As with any other online risks of

harm, every adult in school (teachers and teaching assistants in particular) must be aware of the risks posed by the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups.

The Government has issued statutory guidance in relation to the Prevent Duty. In addition, to assist schools and to help recipients understand the implications of the duty, the DfE has also produced non-statutory advice. Adults should familiarise themselves with the guidance and the advice, both of which are available in the staffroom and on the school server.

The statutory guidance makes clear the need for schools to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. The school will ensure that suitable filtering is in place. Internet safety is integral to the school's ICT curriculum and the school will ensure it is embedded in the school curriculum. In addition to advice on internet safety provided by the school, further general advice and resources for schools on internet safety are available on the UK Safer Internet Centre website

Keeping children safe from risks posed by terrorist exploitation of social media should be approached by adults in school in the same way as safeguarding children from any other form of online abuse. The DfE has produced a briefing note aimed mainly at Headteachers, teachers and safeguarding leads in schools detailing how social media platforms are being used in particular to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq. All adults in school (teachers and teaching assistants in particular), should familiarise themselves with the contents of the briefing note and must ensure that if they have any concerns, the school's normal safeguarding procedures are followed. The Briefing Note is available [in the](#) staffroom and on the school server.

For the avoidance of doubt, if any adult working in school has a concern that a particular pupil or group of pupils is at risk of radicalisation or terrorist exploitation, through social media or otherwise, they must immediately contact the Headteacher and follow the school's normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing the matter with the school's designated safeguarding lead and where deemed necessary, with children's social care at the Local Authority and the local police.

Section 4: Content published on Social Media

4.1 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)

4.2 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 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, 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.

4.3 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

Pupils

- The school's education programme should enable 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 and Carers

- If parents and carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents and carers will be informed about acceptable use.
- The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
- 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 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, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.
- Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media · Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.

4.4 Monitoring posts about the school

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.

Appendix 1: Managing the use of Social Media

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 that may have controversial implications for the school
- 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

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