



The Context for Great Harwood St Bartholomew's Parish C of E Aided Primary School's Social Media Policy

As a school community, we understand that globally (April 2016), there were over 1.5 billion people on Facebook, 1000 million people on What's App, 555 million on Tumblr, 400 million on Instagram, 320 million people on Twitter and 200 million on Snapchat.

The likelihood is that adults and young people in our community, professionally and privately, are amongst these statistics.

These tools have three main things in common:

1. Simplicity of use
2. Focus on human connection & identity
3. Access on any device at any time for free

In a learning context, when new technology is introduced, we see these three attributes as desirable because they motivate people and accelerate the adoption of new habits.

We understand that home-school and professional-private lives seem to have softer lines between them now and know that activity in one area can easily affect the other for better or worse where social media is used. It is our duty to help our community to understand this too.

As a school, we seek:

- maximum positive impact at every level for learning, leadership, relationships & creativity where technology is used
- best value on technology management training and support
- minimal friction where people & technology meet
- minimal risk to our community and technical infrastructure
- minimal duplication of processes or inefficient, unproductive workload

Opportunities & challenges with Social Media

Social media is powerful personally, politically, creatively, positively and negatively. It has been diversely used to

- disrupt nations
- amplify the work of good causes and role models
- destroy the lives of vulnerable people
- engage the difficult to reach living chaotic lives
- share knowledge and ideas of varying quality
- make kittens famous(!)

Based upon these many considerations, our school will work in a position of constant learning, challenge and change, applying a large amount of common sense to all situations. Where legal advice, support or intervention is also required we will apply these too with all the usual expected considerations.



At the forefront of our mind as a school is how we:

1. raise standards
2. safeguard the community
3. promote individual well-being and inclusion
4. understand and support community cohesion in challenging political times

The school sees that social media features in all four areas and not just from the point of our young people. There are wider opportunities for us to pursue our social, moral, spiritual and cultural work using social media as well. Nationally, Ofsted has been starting to comment and recognise the value of connecting to families using social media and we also can see the benefits.

Policy

To give clarity, this is our school policy on how social media will be embraced, technically managed and harnessed flexibly to ensure that we meet the challenges, seize the opportunities and enable others to mindfully connect with others.

Social media use by staff

1. The school has an identified core Social Team who are the first contact for colleagues wanting to use social media in any capacity.
2. Staff are entitled to a private and professional life. It is the individual's responsibility to understand and follow the acceptable use policy of the platform where they have an account.
3. The school has the capacity to provide support and advice to its staff about privacy settings. Staff are expected to seek support from our named social team to gain more confidence before using social media platforms.
4. School staff are expected to apply common sense in all situations and not, for clear and obvious reasons, connect to students using personal social media accounts.
5. Where staff require an account to support learning that is based in a social media platform such as Facebook, the learning will be approved by the Head of Department or member of Senior Leadership Team.
6. Staff must use their professional social media account only for teaching and learning purposes making sure that common sense is applied regarding any comments made or resources shared in what is often a public space.
7. Teaching staff must share their project requirements with the school's technical support people at least 2 weeks ahead of the activity. Filtering will be setup in a safe and possibly time-limited way to ensure a technically successful project.
8. In our community, there are many pre-existing connections between staff and parents. Staff are expected not to discuss any issues relating to school life in such a way as to negatively impact the standing of the school or individuals connected to it.
9. Our HR disciplinary policy will apply should any indiscretion come to light that negatively impacts the standing of the schools or individuals connected to it.



Social media use by students

The school is committed to teaching the responsible use of social media. This commitment is backed up by our existing core school values and understanding that student life is now four dimensional and mobile thanks to technology.

1. Pupils are taught about age limits, terms of use and online safety among other things. Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that children follow the guidance provided by various social media platforms.
2. Some school projects, set up by school and approved by Senior Leadership Team members, may need students to use social media ranging from blogging sites to Twitter. School will tell parents how and when these projects will run.
3. We don't allow the use of personal mobile devices in school and have a separate Acceptable Use Policy which covers this topic. Students are not allowed to access social media on their devices at school. They can access social media for research and communication purposes only as part of an approved school project.
4. The school doesn't allow devices to connect to the school network for using social media. Any costs incurred by students using their own devices to access social media are the responsibility of the student or account holder.

Official School Accounts

For parental and community engagement activities, the school has its own official and externally monitored accounts on the major social media platforms.

The school's existing photograph and permissions policy will be applied to all social media activity by the school.

We will:

1. speak generally about the achievements of students.
2. speak generally about year groups and teams only deal with child specific conversations by phone, face-to-face, email or written letter.
3. share the opportunities we offer more widely.
4. communicate a bit more informally and signpost inquiries as required.
5. listen to our community and support it to help families keep safe online.
6. take steps to mitigate any perceived risk to the smooth-running school or to the personal well-being of connected individuals arising from negative interactions on a social platform including blocking users & removal of content.
7. apply relevant other policies such as behaviour, safeguarding, attendance or HR in relation to negative incidents on social media.

Out of school behaviour related incidents

Any incident of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy. The school can act regarding any incident that takes place outside school hours if it believes

- poses a threat to any individual within school community
- there are negative repercussions for the safe running of the school
- the reputation of the school, employees, governors or connected parties will be adversely affected

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Where appropriate, legal advice action will be taken by the school's Governors.

Draft Version - awaiting ratification by Governors

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