St Peters CofE Primary Academy

Executive Principal: Matthew Seex

Chair of Local Academy Committee: Zoe Heath

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

St Peter's CofE Academy, Stonnall

Statement of intent

St Peter's CofE Primary Academy 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 are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents and carers in support of the school's mission, values and objectives.
- Protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Arranging online safety updates for parents

Legal framework

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

- DfE (2018) 'Data protection: a toolkit for schools'
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Roles and responsibilities

The Executive Principal & Head of School are responsible for:
• The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
• Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media.
• Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
• Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including against any of the protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
• In conjunction with the Combined Local Academy Committee (CLAC), handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
• Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.
• Taking steps to minimise the amount of misplaced or malicious allegations in relation to social media use.
• Working alongside the online safety officer and data protection officer (DPO) to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR.

The CLAC is responsible for:
• Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
• Reviewing this policy on a regular basis.
• Ensuring their own knowledge of online safety issues is up-to-date.
• Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction.

Staff members are responsible for:
• Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy
• Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
• Reporting any social media misuse by staff, pupils or parents to the Executive Principal/Head of school immediately.
• Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.

Parents are responsible for:
• Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy
• Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home.
• Promoting safe social media behaviour for both themselves and their children.
• Attending online safety meetings held by the school wherever possible.
• Accessing the school's website pages which contain online and social media information
• Not engaging in activities involving social media which might bring the school into disrepute.
• Not representing their personal views as those of the school on any social medium.
• Acting in the best interests of pupils when creating, participating in or contributing to social media sites.

<u>Pupils are responsible for:</u>
• Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.
• Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online.
• Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced online.
• Reporting online safety incidents and concerns in line with the procedures within this policy.
• Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.

<u>ICT technicians are responsible for:</u>
• Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the school's social media accounts.
• Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the Executive Principal.
• Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.

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
• Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
• Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
• 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter/Threads

For the purpose of this policy, "**cyberbullyin**g" 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, CLAC member or ex-pupil.

Staff social media use

Personal accounts

Staff members will not access social media platforms during lesson times, but they are permitted to use social media during break times. Staff will avoid using social media in front of pupils.

Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts. Staff are not permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access personal accounts, unless otherwise permitted by the Executive Principal, and once the online safety officer has ensured the necessary network security controls are applied.

Staff will not 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact pupils or parents through their personal social media accounts. If pupils or parents attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member, they will report this to the Executive Principal.

Staff members will not provide their home address, phone number, mobile number, social networking details or email addresses to pupils or parents – any contact with pupils or parents will be done through authorised school contact channels. Staff members will use their school email address for school business and personal email address for their private correspondence; the two should not be mixed.

Staff members will ensure the necessary privacy controls are applied to personal accounts and will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of the school on their personal social media accounts. Where staff members use social media in a personal capacity, they will ensure it is clear that views are personal and are not those of the school.

No staff member will post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils. Staff members will not post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the school – this includes any images, videos and personal information. Staff will not take any posts, images or videos from social media that belong to the school for their own personal use. Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal. Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community via social media by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Social media will not be used as a platform to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues or other professionals.

Staff members' personal information will not be discussed on social media.

Parent social media use

Parents are able to comment on or respond to information shared via social media sites; however, parents should do so in a way which does not damage the reputation of the school.

Parents will be asked not to share any photos or personal details of pupils when commenting on school social media sites, nor post comments concerning other pupils or staff member.

Any parents that are seen to be breaching the guidance in this policy will be required to attend a meeting with the Executive Principal, and may have their ability to interact with the social media websites removed.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution.

Pupil social media use

Pupils will not access social media in school as they are below the permitted ages.

If pupils attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through a personal social media account, the member of staff will report this to the Head of School who will then discuss this inappropriate behaviour with the parent/carer.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to suspension/exclusion.

Online safety

Any disclosures made by pupils to staff about online abuse, harassment or exploitation, whether they are the victim or disclosing on behalf of another child, will be handled in line with the Safeguarding Policy and the Online Safety Policy.

Concerns regarding a staff member's online behaviour will be reported to the Executive Principal/Head of School, who will decide on the best course of action in line with the relevant policies. If the concern is about the Executive Principal, it will be reported to the chair of CLAC.

Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the Executive Principal will contact the police. The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils, e.g. calling the police, where criminal behaviour is thought to be inadvertent and as a result of ignorance or normal developmental curiosity, e.g. a pupil has taken and distributed indecent imagery of themselves. The DSL will decide in which cases this response is appropriate and will manage such cases in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

As part of the usual communication with parents, the school will reinforce the importance of pupils being safe online and inform parents what systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use. The school will also make it clear to parents what their children are being asked to do online for school, including what sites they will be asked to access and who from the school, if anyone, they will be interacting with online.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying incidents are taken seriously at St Peter's CofE Primary Academy. Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by pupils will be handled in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.

Cyberbullying against pupils or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with quickly and effectively wherever they occur in line with the Anti-bullying Policy. Allegations of cyberbullying from staff members will be handled in accordance with the Low Level Concerns Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Training

The academy recognises that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyberbullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils. Teachers and support staff will receive ongoing training as part of their development.

Pupils will be educated about online safety and appropriate social media use on a termly basis through a variety of mediums, including assemblies, PSHE lessons, computing lessons and cross-curricular links. Pupils will be provided with material to reinforce their knowledge.

Parents will be able to access online safety information via our website and Class Dojo. Training for all pupils and staff and information for parents will be refreshed in light of any significant incidents or changes.

Monitoring and review

The next scheduled review date for this policy is July 2026.

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