Social Media

Policy

2021 - 2023

Agreed by:	Governing Body	
Review date:	November 2023	

Context

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation, whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff, students and volunteers at the school.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- protect the school from legal risks;
- ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected;
- safeguard all children;
- ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school.

Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: blogs, online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services, 'microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Skype, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Yelp, Twitch, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

All members of staff 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 Equalities, Child Protection and Acceptable Use Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes, and the personal use of social media.

Use of Social Media in practice

1. Personal use of social media

School staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media, whilst in employment at Adderley Primary School;

- Staff must not use social media applications in work time for personal use unless permission has been given by the headteacher.
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated senior leader(s) for Child Protection (see appendix 1 for guide on managing a social media account).

- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above;
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts;
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account;
- All emails shall carry a standard disclaimer which highlights that the views contained within are those of the individual and not necessarily the organisation;
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher;
- Staff should avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts. This includes commenting on such posts or 'liking/disliking' them;
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts/platforms;
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 20 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

2. School-sanctioned use of social media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, the school has an official Twitter account (@adderleyschool). There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff may not set up social media accounts linked to the school. All accounts may only be set up under the direction and management of the Strategic Leadership Team and with the knowledge and approval of the Head Teacher;
- Staff wishing to publish information on social media (eg tweeting) may request a message to be sent via the network manager who may then only send such communication once agreed by a member of the SLT
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect positively on the school in all communications;
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers, identify by full name or class any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts;
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- High regard must be made to the child protection register and looked after children, hence why only SLT members (who are DSLs) may authorise the publishing of information online;
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of the leadership team;
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media whether publicly or privately.

Don't accept friend requests from pupils on social media

10 rules for school staff on Facebook

1. Change your display name – use your first and middle name, use a maiden name, or put your surname backwards instead
2. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, ensure that the image is professional
3. Check your privacy settings regularly
4. Be careful about tagging other staff members in images or posts
5. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be just as happy showing your pupils
6. Don't use social media sites during school hours
7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, our school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there
8. Don't associate yourself with the school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)
9. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts. Anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile number) is able to find you using this information
10. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone. The app recognises wifi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same wifi connection (such as parents or pupils)

Check your privacy settings

> Change the visibility of your posts and photos to **'Friends only'**, rather than 'Friends of friends'. Otherwise, pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they're friends with anybody on your contacts list

> Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos** – go to bit.ly/2MdQXMN to find out how to limit the visibility of previous posts

> The public may still be able to see posts you've **'liked'**, even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster

> **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public

> Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people can't **search for you by name** – go to bit.ly/2zMdVht to find out how to do this

> Remember that **some information is always public**; your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender

What to do if…

A pupil adds you on social media

> In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile

> Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture

> If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents. If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages

> Notify the senior leadership team or the headteacher about what's happening

A parent adds you on social media

> It is at your discretion whether to respond. Bear in mind that:

  • Responding to one parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other teachers at the school

  • Pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in

> If you wish to decline the offer or ignore the message, consider drafting a stock response to let the parent know that you're doing so

You're being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

> **Do not** retaliate or respond in any way

> Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred

> Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it

> If the perpetrator is a current pupil or staff member, our mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents

> If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address any reasonable concerns or complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material

> If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a senior leader should consider contacting the police