"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Proverbs 22:6

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Adopted	Autumn Term 2024
Committee	Standards
Review Date	Autumn Term 2025

We are a Christian school where quality and opportunities make a difference. We value all children as unique 'Children of God' and nurture each other to show **LOVE** in our relationships and a **RESPECT** for all. We foster **HOPE** within our community and encourage children to find **PEACE** by creating times and places for stillness and reflection. We strive for excellence, inspiring dreams both now and in the future. We promote **POSITIVITY**, celebrate **COURAGE**, demonstrate **RESPONSIBILITY** and share **JOY** through…

'Learning, loving, laughing in the light of Jesus'.

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1. Rationale

Forsbrook CE Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities, which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils are actively 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. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by its staff, parents/carers and children.

2. Scope

This policy is subject to the school's Staff 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 Forsbrook C of E Primary School.

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.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. 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.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher and SLT

The Headteacher and 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,
- Make an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required,
- Make themselves aware of the *General Terms of Use* as listed in Section 12,
- Receive and review social media account applications,
- Approve account creation.

3.2 Administrator/ Moderator

- 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 the account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring).

3.3 Staff

All staff will:
- Read and understand the contents of this policy and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies,
- Be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, pupils and colleagues on social media,
- Attend appropriate training,
- Regularly monitor, update and manage content he/she has posted,
- Make themselves aware of the children in their care and the restrictions to social media and/or other media pertaining to the identification of said child. These restrictions can be obtained from a central location on *Staff Share* and/or obtained from the administration staff.
- Not make any links to the school on personal accounts or using personal accounts unless express permission is given by the Headteacher.

4. Process for Creating New Accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work. Anyone wishing to create a social media 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 2 staff member should be named),
- Will the account be open or private/closed,

Following consideration by SLT, an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood the policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

5. Monitoring

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 48 hours (or on the next working day if received at the weekend) even if the response is 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.

6. Behaviour

- 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. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media, staff must follow the school media policy 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 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.

7. Legal Considerations

- 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.
- Acceptable use of social networking must comply with UK law. In applying this policy, the school will adhere to its rights and responsibilities and duties in accordance with: *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000*

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Equality Act 2010
The Defamation Act 2013

8. Handling abuse

When acting on behalf of the school, staff will:

- Handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- Report any comment deemed abusive to the headteacher and/or computing lead immediately for support and action.
- If staff feel that they 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.
- 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.

8.1 Action: inappropriate use of social media

- Following a report of inappropriate use of social media, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will conduct a prompt investigation.
- If in the course of the investigation, it is found that a pupil submitted the material to the website, that pupil will be disciplined in line with the school's behaviour policy.
- The Headteacher or Senior Leaders, where appropriate, will approach the website hosts to ensure the material is either amended or removed as a matter of urgency, ie within 24 hours. If the website requires the individual who is complaining to do so personally, the school will give their full support and assistance.
- Checks will be carried out to ensure that the requested amendments or removals are made. If the website(s) does not co-operate, senior leaders will contact the internet service provider (ISP) as the ISP has the ability to block access to certain sites and, in exceptional circumstances, can close down a website.
- If the material is threatening and/or intimidating, the Headteacher or SLT will, with the member of staff's consent, report the matter to the police.

9. Use on Behalf of the School

9.1 Staff
Staff will:

- Ensure that the content posted on school related social media accounts reflects the respectful and inclusive ethos prescribed by the school,

- Not comment or reply to any statement that could bring the School's reputation into disrepute. Furthermore, staff are reminded that any content posted is a permanent representation of the school, therefore content/interactions with community members will be monitored,
- Staff should refrain from conversational content with parents over social media accounts,
- Ensure that photos of pupils are **not** stored on personal devices and must be checked against the photo permission and social media permission list before being posted onto any social media platform,
- Not post photos of pupils with names attached in any capacity,
- Ensure that any work posted reflects the school's high expectations and therefore must uphold the high standards set within the school,
- Ensure that use of the school social media accounts must adhere to the Child Protection and Data Protection Policy at all times,
- Post content during non-teaching time, unless using specific pupil accounts for the purpose of teaching social media and must not use personal electronic devices while pupils are present,
- Ensure that children or locations of children are not tagged in any social media posts.

9.2 Use of images

School use of images are acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to:

- Permission to use any photograph or video recording will be sought prior to posting on any social media platform. Where permission is not provided or the child asks not to be photographed or filmed, their wishes must be respected,
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts,
- Staff should exercise professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts in accordance with the above statements. Children should be appropriately dressed, not subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published (please see photograph and video permission and social media permission before posting),
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately and further action will be taken.

9.3 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.

10.   Personal Use

10.1 Staff
Personal communications are those made via 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,

- Staff are strongly advised **not** to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts,
- Staff will not use any personal social media accounts to contact pupils or their family members,
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings accordingly (limiting all content to 'friends only') every three months as privacy options are updated regularly on social media platforms and so staff may not be consistently protected if they fail to update settings,
- Staff should refrain from discussing matters related to the school in public forums,
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, disciplinary action may be taken,
- Staff are not permitted to have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with,
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the school's reputation then the appropriate action is entitled to be taken,
- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils of the school (if under the age of 18) on any personal social media network account.

10.2 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 should completing of blogging, vlogging and/or other online source become public beyond the remits of the schools in house education programme. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy,

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from Facebook. *There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen; at the time of time of writing this policy the direct link for this is: http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=underage*

- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day,

- All pupil mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off,

- 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 and filtering should block this use. If this is breached, Headteacher and/or SLT should be informed,

- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision,

- Pupils should report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher and/or trusted other adult in confidence. The appropriate action will be taken.

10.3 Parents/Carers

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,

Observation of and interaction with the schools social media accounts via personal accounts should be positive in nature. If parents/carers feel negatively about the content, they should contact the class teacher, member of SLT or Headteacher to discuss this.

11.   Safeguarding

The use of social networking sites introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people.

Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- online bullying;
- grooming, exploitation or stalking;
- exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language;
- encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking.

In order to mitigate these risks and promote safety on line:

- Staff should not use any information in an attempt to locate or meet a child.
- Ensure that any messages, photos or information comply with existing policies.

11.1 Reporting safeguarding concerns

- Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the school.
- Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child.
- With regard to personal safeguarding, staff should report any harassment or abuse they receive online while using their work accounts.

Other items pertaining to the safeguarding of pupils in attendance can be found in the school's Safeguarding Policy or Online Safety Policy.

11.2 Parental expectations
regarding school social media accounts

As above, 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/guardian to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. Failing removal, the school will refer any abusive, libellous or defamatory comments to the site's 'report abuse' section for immediate removal. Where necessary, the school will refer parents to the school's complaints procedure.

11.3 Cyber Bullying

Parents/carers should be aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school. This can be a complex area, therefore examples of incidents and resolutions are enclosed below. If a disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted Safeguarding and/or Online Safety Policy. If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying. If a parent/carer is making threats online against a member of school staff – this is considered as bullying. The member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately and the parent/carer spoken to. Should the situation not be resolved, the police and LA should be informed.

11.4   Examples of cyber-bullying scenarios:
- A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and text from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.

- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using texts or other age-appropriate social media platform. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.

- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is ambiguous. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, the school is also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the schools recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school, but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.

11.5 Reporting, responding and recording cyberbullying incidents

- Staff should never engage with cyberbullying incidents. If in the course of your employment with the school, you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate or inflammatory written material relating to you, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without your permission, you should immediately report this to the Headteacher or a member of SLT.
- Staff should keep any records of the abuse such as text, emails, voicemail, website or social media. If appropriate, screen prints of messages or web pages could be taken and the time, date and address of site should be recorded.

12.   General Terms of Use
Social Networking applications:

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute,
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns,
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner,
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff,
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies,
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents,
- All members of the Forsbrook Primary School community are advised not to post or share content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others on any social media service,

- Staff must use dedicated iPads for their social media use and must not use personal devices to create posts, store photographs, videos or media of any type pertaining to the pupils or families in the school,
- The use of social media or apps will be robustly risk assessed by the DSL prior to use. Any use of social media on digital devices will take place in accordance with our Acceptable Use Policy.