

SNAITH PRIMARY SCHOOL



Social Media and Online Communication Policy

Date policy was updated	Dec 24
Person responsible for the policy	Helen Galpin Ben Pickering

Statement of intent

Snaith Primary School understands that social media and online communication 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 and online communication by all staff, parents and pupils in support of the school's mission, values and objectives.
- Protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media and online communication.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media and online communication.
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Supporting parents with online safety information.

1. 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 (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Online/E Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Good Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to their social media use and online communication.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media and online communication.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use and online communication.
- 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 governing board, 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 and online communication.
- Working alongside the school IT lead and data protection officer (DPO) to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.

- Reviewing this policy on an annual 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 and the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff as identified in the staff code of conduct.
- 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 and online communication misuse by staff, pupils or parents to the headteacher immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use and online communication offered by the school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy identifying the Social Media and Online Communication Code of Conduct for Parents.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and online communication and the influence on their children at home.
- Promoting safe social media and online communication behaviour for both themselves and their children.
- Accessing information provided by the school with regard to online safety.
- Not engaging in activities involving social media and online communication 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 or on online communication platforms.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the schools Good Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media and online communication 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.

The schools IT Lead together with the school LA technician service is responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of school apps.
- Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the headteacher.
- Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.

3. 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:

- Evidence Me, Hero
- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as NetMums
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube, Tik Tok
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, such as X (formerly known as Twitter)
- Commenting on 3rd party websites such as news articles

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines “**online communication**” as any online platform that offers interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, not limited to, the following:

- Whatsapp
- Snapchat
- Online games, such as Minecraft, Fortnite

For the purpose of this policy, “**cyberbullying**” 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, governor or ex-pupil.

4. Data protection principles

The school obtains consent from parents when they complete the admissions to school form regarding whether or not they consent to the school posting images and videos of a pupil on social media platforms. The consent will be valid for the duration of the child’s time at school unless circumstances change and parents update the school with this information. Parents asked to check that the information school holds on their children is accurate annually. Consent provided for the use of images and videos only applies to school accounts – staff, pupils and parents are not permitted to post any imagery or videos on personal accounts.

A record of consent is maintained throughout the academic year, which details the pupils for whom consent has been provided. The DPO is responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.

Parents are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents must inform the school in writing. Where parents withdraw or amend their consent, it will not affect the processing of any images or videos prior to when consent was withdrawn or amended. Processing will cease in line with parents’ and pupils’ requirements following this. Wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, the school will take measures to remove any posts before consent was withdrawn or amended, such as removing an image from a social media site.

The school follows strict guidelines outlined in the staff code of conduct about taking photos and on the devices that school accepts for this use.

When posting on social media, the school will use group or class images or videos with general labels, e.g. 'sports day'.

When posting images and videos of pupils, the school will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of a pupil being identified. The school will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms and pupils' full names will never be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent record log to ensure consent has been received for that pupil and for the exact processing activities required.
- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.

Any breaches of the data protection principles will be handled in accordance with the school's Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan.

5. Staff social media use

School accounts

The school's social media sites will only be created and monitored by designated staff members and with the approval of the headteacher.

A school social media account will be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members and will be linked to an official school email account.

Consideration will be given to the following aspects:

- The purpose for using social media
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether pupils, staff, parents or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account
- How much time and effort staff members are willing to commit to the proposed site
- How the success of the site will be evaluated

At Snaith Primary School from time to time the school posts on a closed you tube channel (eg musical, charity fundraising events), and also on the schools Evidence Me, Class Dojo and Hero platforms by invitation only. If children attend a sporting event where the image maybe used for social media, Eg such at the Secondary School cluster events, the staff member supervising is responsible for ensuring that all children are able to be represented.

School social media passwords are kept in the main office – these are not shared with any unauthorised persons, including pupils, unless otherwise permitted by the headteacher. Staff will adhere to the data protection principles outlined in section 4 of this policy at all times.

Staff will ensure any posts are positive in nature and relevant to pupils, the work of staff, the school or any achievements. Staff will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.

All content expressed on school social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.

Staff will post communications in line with what has been agreed by staff at staff meetings and under the direction of the headteacher.

If inappropriate content is accessed online, this will be reported to the schools IT lead, DSL, data protection officer and Headteacher.

The school's social media accounts will comply with site rules at all times, particularly with regards to the minimum age limit for use of the site.

6. Parent social media and online communication use

Parents are able to comment on or respond to information shared via school social media sites and this is monitored by school who reserve the right to accept or decline the comments.

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

Any parents that are seen to be breaching the guidance in this policy maybe contacted by the school/headteacher or required to attend a meeting with the headteacher.

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

7. Children's social media and online communication use

Children will not attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media and online communication accounts. Children are only permitted to be affiliates of school social media accounts. Where a pupil or parent attempts to "friend" or 'follow' a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the headteacher.

Children will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils. Children will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Children are instructed not to sign up to any social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil's age.

Any media devices such as mobile phones must be collected in each morning and are stored in the main office. Children are only allowed to access online material on school premises using the school devices. These are subject to a Local Authority filtering and monitoring system that is reported on daily and in the event of a breach where there is a concern. The school system enables staff to track devices used to children and follow up accordingly.

Children who misuse social media and online communication out of school involving other pupils may be subject to sanctions in the Good Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy.

8. 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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns regarding a staff member's online behaviour will be reported to the headteacher and will be followed up in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. If the concern is about the headteacher, it will be reported to the chair of governors.

Concerns regarding a pupil's online behaviour will be reported to the DSL and Headteacher, who will investigate any concerns with relevant staff members and manage concerns in accordance with relevant policies depending on their nature, e.g. the Good Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the headteacher 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. 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, as documented above.

9. Blocked content

In accordance with the school's Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan, the Local Authority install firewalls on the school's network to prevent access to certain websites. The following social media websites are not accessible on the school's network:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram

In the event of any inappropriate content being accessed on the school's computers will be reported to the Local Authority so that the site can be blocked and school can follow up the user.

The Headteacher, DPO Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead receives regular updates from the Local Authority Smoothwall checks about online content accessed on the schools computers and any alerts.

Cyberbullying incidents are taken seriously at Snaith Primary School. Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by pupils will be handled in accordance with the Good behaviour and 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 towards staff members will be handled in accordance with the Local Authority Policy.

Social Media and Online Communication Code of Conduct for Parents

Online safety, social media and online communication conduct

The school will expect parents to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting defamatory content about parents, pupils, the school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media
- Posting content containing confidential information regarding the school or any members of its community, e.g. a complaint outcome
- Contacting school employees through social media and online communication platforms, including requesting to 'follow' or 'friend' them, or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff, child/ren or the school in general
- Posting images of any staff members or pupils without their prior consent

Parents' social media and online communication usage will be in accordance with the school's Social Media Policy. The school retains the right to request that any damaging material is removed from social media websites and online communication platforms .

If parents have a concern they are encouraged to contact school directly.

Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution. Parents will be instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

Online Communication

The school will expect parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, online games, for purposes beneficial to themselves, other parents and the school, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Sending frequent messages to members of staff
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Bringing the school or its staff into disrepute

The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging and online communication; however, the school staff should not be expected to respond to messages outside school hours and parents are asked to respect that staffs chief commitment is to teaching children therefore responses will be timely but may not be the same day. If parents

wish to talk to staff, parents will arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to the school office.

In the event of a breach of the social media expectations/code of conduct, the school may take action to share their concerns with families or outside agencies if necessary.

Photography and images

Parents will be permitted to take photos at school events but should be mindful of others' privacy and seek permission from other parents prior to taking photos of them or their children. Photos taken at school events must only be used for personal use and must not be posted on social media sites. This is to protect vulnerable children who's identity may require protection. Posting on social media could put children at risk of harm.

Responsibility

Parents will be responsible for supporting the school by monitoring their own use of social media and online messaging. Parents will be expected to adhere to the Social Media and Online Communication Code of Conduct for Parents at all times.

Parents will be responsible for ensuring they support the school by monitoring their children's use of social media and online messaging. Parents will be expected to support their children to keep themselves safe in the online world and in adhering to the schools Good Behaviour and Anti Bullying policy which also refers to the online world.

