ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

February 2025

Our Mission Statement

The Mission of St. John's Catholic Primary School is to grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus by being: responsible, caring, prayerful, creative, independent, thoughtful, curious and respectful. We live our Mission by:

- Ensuring that our attitudes and values are transmitted through a curriculum that is consistent with the Catholic faith
- Delivering a curriculum that is relevant, varied, interesting, stimulating, balanced and appropriate
- Developing policies and schemes of work which recognise that R.E. is an integral part of the curriculum
- Developing sound teaching and effective classroom management
- Generating a positive attitude to learning where realistic expectations of pupils and high standards of work are expected
- Using a variety of teaching approaches that reflect the needs of individual pupils
- Participating in projects which focus on the needs of others including local and international charities

St. John's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, established by the Church to serve the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge, St. Bernadette's, Westbury and St. Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon.

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Statement of intent

St John's Catholic Primary school 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 pupils 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 cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Arranging e-safety meetings for parents.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- DfE (2018) 'Data protection: a tool kit for schools'
- The Data Protection Act 2018

1.2. This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following school policies and documents:

- E-Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1. 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 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, but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

- In conjunction with the governing body, 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 data protection officer (DPO) to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with the GDPR.

2.2. Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the e-Safety 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 headteacher immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.

2.3. Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy, the schools e-Safety policy & the Home School Agreement 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 e-safety meetings held by the school wherever possible.

2.4. Pupils are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Home School Agreement.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online. (age appropriate)

3. Definitions

3.1. 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.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, Snapchat
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter
- Communication tools such as Zoom, MS Teams, Seesaw and G Suite

3.2. For the purpose of this policy, **"cyber bullying"** 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.

3.3. 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

4.1. The school will obtain consent from parents when their children join the school. This will confirm whether or not consent is given for posting images and videos of a pupil on social media platforms and other mediums such as the school website. The consent will be valid for the entire academic year. At the start of each academic year, parents will be given the opportunity to review their consents.

4.2. A record of consent is maintained by the school office, which details the pupils for whom consent has been provided. The DPO is responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.

4.3. For the purpose of section 4.1, where a pupil is assessed by the school to have the competence to understand what they are consenting to, the school will obtain consent directly from that pupil; otherwise, consent is obtained from whoever holds parental responsibility for the child.

4.4. Parents and pupils are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents and pupils must inform the school in writing.

4.5. Consent can be provided for certain principles only, for example only images of a pupil are permitted to be posted, and not videos. This will be made explicitly clear on the consent from provided.

4.6. Where parents or pupils 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.

4.7. In line with section 4.5, 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.

4.8. The school will only post images and videos of pupils for whom consent has been received.

4.9. Only school-owned devices will be used to take images and videos of the school community, which have been pre-approved by the head teacher / SBM (School Business Manager) for use.

4.10. The school will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms.

4.11. Pupils' full names will never be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

4.12. Only appropriate images and videos of pupils will be posted in which they are suitably dressed, i.e. it would not be suitable to display an image of a pupil in swimwear.

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

4.14. Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent records 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.

4.15. Any breaches of the data protection principles will be handled in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy & GDPR related policies.

4.16. 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.

5. Social media use – staff

School accounts

5.1. School social media passwords are kept in the SBMs (School Business Manager) office – these are not shared with any unauthorised persons, including pupils, unless otherwise permitted by the head teacher.

5.2. Staff will ensure any posts are positive in nature and relevant to pupils, the work of staff, the school or any achievements.

5.3. If staff wish for reminders to be posted for parents, e.g. returning slips for a school trip, staff will seek permission from the SBM / head teacher before anything is posted.

5.4. Staff will adhere to the data protection principles outlined in section 4 of this policy at all times.

5.5. Staff will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.

5.6. If the school becomes aware that inappropriate content is accessed online, the head teacher will be notified & appropriate action taken.

6. PTA Accounts

Social media accounts operated by the Friends of the school must be moderated by members of the committee. Any content which could be seen to be damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils must be removed.

Members of school staff should not post or comment on this page at any time.

Personal accounts

6.1. Staff members will not access social media platforms during lesson times.

6.2. Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts, unless it is beneficial to the material being taught – prior permission will be sought from the headteacher.

6.3. Staff members are permitted to use social media during break times.

6.4. Staff are not permitted to use the school's Wi-Fi network to access personal accounts, unless otherwise permitted by the head teacher.

6.5. Staff will avoid using social media in front of pupils.

6.6. Staff will not "friend" or otherwise contact pupils or parents through their personal social media accounts.

6.7. If pupils or parents persistently attempt to "friend" a staff member they will report this to the headteacher.

6.8. 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.

6.9. Staff members will ensure the necessary privacy controls are applied to personal accounts.

6.10. Staff members will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of St John's Catholic Primary School on their personal social media accounts.

6.11. No staff member will post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.

6.12. Where staff members use social media in a personal capacity, they will ensure it is clear that views are personal and are not that of St John's Catholic Primary School.

6.13. Staff members will not post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the school – this includes any images, videos and personal information.

6.14. Staff will not take any posts, images or videos from social media that belong to the school for their own personal use.

6.15. Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

6.16. 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.

6.17. Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

6.18. 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.

6.19. Members of staff will not leave a computer or other device logged in when away from their desk or save passwords.

6.20. 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.

7. Social media use – pupils and parents

7.1. Pupils will not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity.

7.2. Pupils and parents will not attempt to "friend" or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Pupils and parents are only permitted to be affiliates of school social media accounts.

7.3. Where a pupil or parent persistently attempts to "friend" a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the headteacher.

7.4. Pupils and parents will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

7.5. Pupils and parents will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.

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

7.7. If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it will be reported to a teacher.

7.8. Pupils are not permitted to use the school's Wi-Fi network to access any social media platforms unless prior permission has been sought from the head teacher, and the SBM has ensured appropriate network security measures are applied by the schools I.T. provider.

7.9. Parents are not permitted to use the school's Wi-Fi network to access any social media platforms on personal devices. Social media access on school-owned devices may be permitted in line with 6.8.

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

8. Blocked content

8.1. The school's I.T. service provider (Oakford) installs firewalls on the school's network to prevent access to certain websites, such as Instagram.

8.2. Attempts made to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment, other than with close supervision.

8.3. Inappropriate content accessed on the school's computers will be reported to the schools I.T. service provider by the Schools Business Manager so that the site can be blocked.

8.4. The school retains the right to monitor staff and pupil access to websites when using the school's network and on school-owned devices.

8.5. Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by informing the School Business Manager who will liaise with the schools I.T. service provider.

9. Cyber bullying

9.1. Cyber bullying incidents are taken seriously at St John's Catholic Primary School. Any reports of cyber bullying on social media platforms by pupils will be handled in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

9.2. Allegations of cyber bullying from staff members will be handled in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

9.3. Staff members will not respond or retaliate to cyber bullying incidents. Incidents will be reported as inappropriate, and support will be sought from the head teacher.

9.4. Evidence from the incident will be saved, including screen prints of messages or web pages, and the time and date of the incident.

9.5. Where the perpetrator is a current pupil or colleague, most incidents can be handled through the school's own disciplinary procedures.

9.6. Where the perpetrator is an adult, in nearly all cases, a member of the SLT will invite the victim to a meeting to address their concerns. Where appropriate, the perpetrator will be asked to remove the offensive content.

9.7. If the perpetrator refuses to comply, it is up to the school to decide what to do next. This could include contacting the internet service provider in question through their reporting mechanisms, if the offensive content breaches their terms and conditions.

9.8. If the material is threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitutes a hate crime, the school will consider whether the police should be contacted.

9.9. As part of the school's ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of computing and PSHE.

10. Training

10.1. At St John's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyber bullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

10.2. Teachers and support staff will receive a copy of the Social Media Policy as part of their new starter induction.

10.3. Teachers and support staff will receive ongoing training as part of their development.

10.4. Pupils will be age appropriately educated about e-safety and appropriate social media use on a termly basis through a variety of mediums, including: assemblies, PSHE lessons and cross-curricular links.

10.5. Pupils will be provided with material to reinforce their knowledge, such as our E-Safety Leaflet for Pupils.

10.6. Parents will be invited to e-safety and social media training on a regular basis and will be provided with relevant resources.

10.7. Training for all pupils, staff and parents will be refreshed in light of any significant incidents or changes.

11. Monitoring and review

11.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the head teacher & governors, in conjunction with the DPO.

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

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

Head teacher : Mrs K O'Rourke

Chair of Governors : Mrs C Doogue

Review cycle:	Bi-Annually
Next review due:	February 2027

Blocked content access request form

Requester	
Staff name:	

Date:	
Full URL:	
Site content:	
Reasons for access:	
Identified risks and control measures:	
Authoriser	
Approved?	✓ / X
Reasons:	
Staff name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Inappropriate content report form

Staff name (submitting report):	

Name of individual accessing inappropriate content (if known):	
Date:	
Full URL(s):	
Nature of inappropriate content:	
To be completed by Data Protection Administrator	
Action taken:	
Staff name:	
Date:	
Signature:	