



St Matthew's Primary School

Social Media Policy

Luton Borough Council Policy

Date Policy Written: September 2023

Review Cycle: Annual basis or sooner if required.

Ratified by Governing Board on: 4th December 2023

Next review date: September 2024

Social Media Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy provides the acceptable standards for the use of social media platforms for all employees at St Matthew's Primary School. Volunteers and casual workers should also be made aware of the standards and expectations set out in this policy.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) the Code of Conduct, the Internet and E-mail and Acceptable Use Policy
- 1.3 For the purposes of this policy, social media is any online platform or any application that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes social media forums such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, LinkedIn and Reddit. Social media also covers blogs, and video / image-sharing websites such as Youtube. It further covers gaming platforms (such as Minecraft, World of Warcraft etc), online discussion groups, dating sites, and gambling sites. It also covers other forms of electronic communication software/applications such as texting, SMS, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger.

Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and it is a constantly changing area, therefore, the examples listed are not an exhaustive list. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.

- 1.4 The school understands that many people may choose to use social media sites/applications in their private lives. This policy does not seek to prevent the use of social media sites/applications, but seeks to provide clear guidelines on the acceptable use of social media by employees.

2.0 Communications

- 2.1 There are two different forms of communication: personal communications and professional communications.
- 2.2 Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. Personal communications that demonstrate a failure to follow professional standards or could damage the school/employer reputation are within the scope of this policy.
- 2.3 Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school social media account, or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

3.0 Purpose

3.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- Set out clear guidance on the acceptable use of social media sites/applications
- Safeguard children
- Ensure confidentiality of the school, its employees and pupils is maintained at all times
- To protect the reputation of the school/trust
- Ensure that all employees understand the consequences of failing to comply with the Social Media Policy
- Ensure the appropriate use of the school's resources

4.0 Governing Body/Headteacher responsibilities

4.1 Luton HR Traded Services will provide guidance on updating this policy as and when appropriate.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the headteacher to publicise and make this policy available to all, ensuring that the standards within it are both monitored and enforced, and to advise the governing body of any serious breaches of this policy. In a Trust, it is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to make centrally employed staff aware of the policy.

4.3 It is the responsibility of the governing body, headteacher and/or CEO to take corrective and/or disciplinary measures as are necessary when a breach of this standard occurs and to contact and co-operate with police and other law enforcement agencies where a breach of these standards may constitute a criminal act.

5.0 Employees' responsibilities

5.1 It is the responsibility of the employee, volunteer, or casual worker to read and comply with the Social Media Policy. Any failure to abide by the Social Media Policy may result in disciplinary action.

5.2 Employees, volunteers and casual workers **must** alert the headteacher or a relevant senior member of staff where a breach of the policy, by themselves or another employee, is suspected or known to have occurred. Employees should ensure that they are fulfilling their responsibility in relation to filtering and monitoring by reporting any incidents of harmful or inappropriate content being accessed on school IT equipment. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken.

5.3 **School employees must be aware that everything posted online is public in nature, even with the strictest privacy settings. Once something is online, it can be copied or screenshotted and redistributed. Therefore, it should be assumed that everything that is written online is permanent and could be shared. All information posted online is subject to Copyright, General Data Protection Regulation legislation and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.**

5.4 All employees are reminded that they are bound by the school's Code of Conduct, and teaching staff are further subject to the Teachers' Standards. Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 school employees may be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where the school has significant concerns or suspicions about an employee's conduct or behaviour.

5.5 All employees are responsible for any content displayed/shared/posted on their social media accounts/applications, and as such must ensure that their privacy settings are updated and maintained appropriately and passwords are kept secure and confidential.

5.6 School employees, volunteers and casual workers should at all times:

- have the highest standards of personal conduct (inside and outside of school)
- ensure that their behaviour (inside and outside of school) does not compromise their position within the school
- ensure that their judgment and integrity should not be able to be brought into question.
- ensure that their relationship with members of the community, via social media, does not compromise their position within the school or bring into question their suitability to work with children and young people.

6.0 Safeguarding Children

6.1 Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear professional boundaries. Employees must abide by the agreed method of communication policies within the school. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

6.2 Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all school employees, volunteers, and casual workers. The key principles that must be followed are:

- School employees **must not** communicate with (including accepting 'friend' / follow requests where the site provides this option) any current pupils of the school, or from any other educational establishment, on social media sites/applications such as

Facebook, Instagram etc. This is applicable **even if** there is permission from a pupil's parent/guardian. (This would not apply to school aged pupils that an individual employee is directly related to, e.g. their child, niece or nephew or a close family friend). Employees should alert the headteacher if they receive any such communication from pupils.

- Employees should not communicate with, including accepting 'friend'/follow requests from, past pupils whilst they are below the age of nineteen. Employees should alert the headteacher if they receive any such communication from past pupils.
- Employees should ensure that all their social media account settings require them to authorise or accept people as friends or followers, where the site allows, to avoid this occurring without their knowledge or approval.

6.3 These principles apply:

- regardless of whether access occurs during or outside of contracted work hours
- to all technology or devices whether provided by the school, or personally owned

7.0 Unacceptable use of Social Media Sites/Applications

7.1 Through Social Media Sites/Applications, employees **must not**:

- disclose private and/or confidential information relating to pupils, parents, other school employees, their employment directly, or the school. This also applies to any other educational establishment that the employee has worked within.
- discuss or reveal any matters relating to the school, previous educational establishments, school employees, pupils or parents
- publish, share, distribute or comment on any material that may be deemed contrary to British Values*.
- identify themselves as a representative of the school online, or on their social media sites/profiles
- write abusive comments regarding current/previous school employees, governors, current/previous pupils or parents/guardians
- harass or bully current/previous school employees, or any persons unrelated or related to the school through cyber bullying and social exclusion
- view or update their personal social media account/profile (on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc) during the working day, unless on a designated break. (This includes via a work or personal mobile telephone and/or Ipad).
- ensure that where their account is updated by proxy, it remains in line with the guidance in this policy. Any employees who's account is legitimately managed by a third party, e.g. a political party or charity is advised to share this policy and speak to the headteacher if they have any concerns
- access or share illegal material

- publish any content, which may be deemed as defamation or discrimination
- post any images of pupils from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked
- without permission, post any images of school employees on social media sites/applications from the school or any other previous education establishment where the employee has worked.
- set up and/or use an alias social media account to circumvent the policy
- comment/post/share any material which could bring the school into disrepute
- breach any of the school's other policies and procedures such as the School's Code of Conduct, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy
- use social media sites/applications as a forum for raising and escalating concerns regarding the School/Trust /Academy or the Council. These concerns should be raised through the line manager or using the Grievance Procedure or the Whistleblowing Procedure.

This list is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the Internet and E-mail Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Conduct.

8.0 Personal Use of Social Media Sites and applications

- 8.1 Employees, volunteers and casual workers are reminded that they are entitled to undertake private conversation on social media sites and applications. However, employees must accept that if the conversation becomes public and the content is deemed to be inappropriate and/or unprofessional disciplinary action may be undertaken.
- 8.2 Employees, volunteers and casual workers should ask themselves the following question "if this conversation became public knowledge could it raise questions about my integrity or suitability to work in a school and could it bring the school into disrepute?"

**British Values are defined as those set out in statutory guidance 'The Prevent Duty' June 2015 and the Governmental advice in 'Improving spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils' November 2014 and within any update to either publication.*