St Columba Church of England Primary Academy

Policy reviewed: January 2020
Next review date: January 2021
Introduction:

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allows us to engage and communicate. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively however, it is also important that we balance this with our duties to the school and our legal responsibilities.

Working in a school, requires us all to maintain professional boundaries in all forms of communication whether or not it involves electronic/digital technology. This is vital to maintain public trust and appropriate professional relationships with students. Our conduct inside or outside of work should not lead us to cross those professional boundaries.

This policy aims to provide and help staff avoid the downside risks of using social media. They apply to all members of staff in our school including governors and volunteers and is everybody’s responsibility. The principles apply to any approved use of social media communication within the school or to personal use of social media outside of school.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks.
- Safeguard all children.
- Ensure the reputation of the school, its staff and Trust is protected.
- Ensure that any users are able to clearly distinguish where information on social media is legitimately representative of the school.

Definition:

There are many social networking applications. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Xbox Live, Blogger, email, websites, texting and SMS. 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, the Malicious Communications Act 1988 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the school’s Equalities, Child Protection and Safeguarding and IT Acceptable Use Policies.

Access to social media sites using school equipment:

With exception of the school Facebook page and email for internal use, staff should not be using social networking sites from its computers.
**Smart watches:**

Smart watches should have messaging turned off during the school day. No member of staff should be seen checking messages on their smart phone during school working hours.

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**Mobile phones, cameras and video recorders:**

- All mobile phones must be kept in a secure place (not in a pocket), switched off and not be accessed throughout contact time with the children/in the school day.
- During school visits mobile phones should be used away from the children and for emergency purposes only.
- Photographs or images of any children within our care may only be taken following parental consent and only using one of the school cameras / I-Pads. These images should remain within this setting or be shared only with the parents of the child or on the schools website or FaceBook page with appropriate permissions.
- Personal mobiles, cameras or video recorders cannot be used to record classroom activities. ONLY school property can be used for this.
- School photographs and recordings can only be transferred to, and stored on a school computer.

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**Personal social media sites and accounts:**

- Staff should maintain professional boundaries with children, parents and carers. Staff should not accept or initiate ‘friend’ requests or communicate through social media websites with children, parents or carers.
- Staff should not accept ex-pupils of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- Staff should make sure that their own social media accounts are private, are aware of who can see information and use with caution when posting information.
- Staff should not post anything that will affect the reputation of the school or the Trust.
- Staff should take care that their interaction on social media does not damage working relationships between members of staff, students at the school, their families and other working partners of the school.
- Staff should not disclose confidential information about students, parents or carers, staff, voluntary or other workers at the school nor breach their right to privacy.
- Staff should not post school logos or similar images, on their personal pages, that may lead readers of posts etc. to believe the individual is speaking on behalf of the school.
- Staff should not share information with students or parents/carers.

Make sure you are aware of your privacy settings. Privacy settings can shift and change without notice. Check the settings frequently. Protect yourself and restrict the amount of personal information you use on these sites.

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School linked social media accounts (including Facebook and Website):

- Staff should check which children have permission for their photos to go online before posting. Children’s photos should not be used unless the school holds permission.
- If posting an item about an aspect of the school, staff should not express any personal views.
- Staff should not post any children’s names on social media.
- Staff should not post any inappropriate comments or abuse on the school social media sites and should immediately report anything negative to the Head teacher and remove any negative comments.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media.
- Tapestry – see paragraph below

Tapestry

Cyber-bullying:

- In order to reduce the potential for cyber-bullying children are not allowed to bring phones into school. If a mobile phone is brought into school by a child it must be kept in the main office until home-time and parents made aware. In exceptional circumstances, parents may ask for the office staff to keep safe a child’s mobile phone.
- If cyber bullying is reported by children, this needs to be logged onto our safeguarding system (CPOMS) and speak to the head teacher about the appropriate steps to take.
- If cyber-bullying take places amongst staff, staff should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. Staff are encouraged to report all incidents of cyber-bullying to the Headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has reported the incident. It is for the individual who is being bullied to decide whether they wish to report the actions to the police.

Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.