



Templemoor Infant and Nursery School

Social Media Policy

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Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them. The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all examples of emerging social media in this policy.

The school recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and children 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 the school, its staff, parents, carers and children.

2. Scope

This policy is subject to the school's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

This policy:

- applies to ***all*** adults working at Templemoor Infant and Nursery School and who provide services for or on behalf of the school including employees (teaching and non-teaching staff), self-employed staff, trainee teachers and any other trainees, apprentices, agency staff, external consultants and volunteers. This policy also applies to school Governors.
- applies 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 the 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.

This policy covers the personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for school purposes, including the use of websites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

This policy covers the use of social media as defined in this policy and also personal blogs and any posts made on other people's blogs and to all on line forums and notice boards. The guidance, rules and principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the social media platform or medium.

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 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.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher and SLT will:

- ensure that all adults working in school are familiar with this policy and any related policies;
- take all reasonable steps to enable adults working with children to work safely and responsibly and to support safer working practice in general with regard to the use of the internet and other communication technologies;
- take all reasonable steps to assist adults to monitor their own practices and standards with regard to the use of the internet and other communication technologies;
- set clear rules in relation to the expected standards of behaviour relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use;
- give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour or practice is unacceptable and that where appropriate, disciplinary, legal and/or other action will be taken;
- ensure that all concerns raised in relation to the accessing of social media or social networking sites are investigated promptly and appropriately;
- take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations being made against all adults working in school;
- take all reasonable steps to prevent adults working in school abusing or misusing their position of trust.
- Facilitate training and guidance on social media use.

All adults working in school* must:

- ensure they are familiar with the contents of this policy;
- adhere to and apply the rules, guidance and principles in this policy in all aspects of their work and in their personal time;

- act in accordance with their duties and responsibilities under this policy and the statutory/ non-statutory advice and guidance referred to;
- raise any concerns or queries in connection with this policy with the Headteacher;
- attend appropriate training provided or facilitated by or the school in relation to the use of the internet or any other communication technologies;
- add an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school;
- never, in any circumstances, abuse or misuse their position of trust.

*All adults working in school means all members of staff (including teaching and non-teaching staff) who work at Templemoor Infant and Nursery School as an employee. It also includes, and is not limited to, trainee teachers, other trainees and apprentices, volunteers, agency staff, external consultants and school Governors.

4. The use of social media sites by pupils within school

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to the use of social networking sites. Social media sites should not be used by pupils in school. Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two. For this reason, no child should be permitted to use personal social media sites in school at any time.

5. The use of social media by all adults working in school in a personal or professional capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of all adults working in school will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines for adults working in school are:

- a) 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.
- b) Digital communications by adults working in school must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Adults will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. Adults must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- c) Adults must understand who is allowed to view the content on their social media pages of any websites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people. Appropriate privacy settings are vital. Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality e.g. 'friends only' (including settings on photographs).
- d) Adults are not permitted to follow or engage with current pupils of the school on any personal social media network account (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- e) Adults must be cautious about any form of social networking contact with former pupils particularly where siblings or other relatives continue to attend the school or may attend the school in future.

- f) Adults must be cautious about following or being followed by parents/carers of pupils, accepting parents of pupils as friends on Facebook or having contact with parents/carers on any social networking site. Adults must be mindful at all times of the boundaries between their work and personal life in accordance with the key principles detailed in this policy.
- g) Adults must also be cautious when inviting work colleagues to be friends on social networking sites. Social networking sites can blur the boundaries between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships.
- h) Adults must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, criticise, abuse or defame children, family members of pupils, colleagues, the Headteacher, governors, the school in general and the wider school community. Adults must always show respect to others when using social media.
- i) Adults must never post derogatory remarks or offensive comments online or engage in online activities which may bring them or the school and the wider school community into disrepute or which could be interpreted as reflecting negatively on their professionalism.
- j) Adults must not represent their personal views on any social media forum as being in any way linked to the school or being the views of the school.
- k) Where social networking and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile relating to job title or information, adults should not put any information onto the site which could identify the school or their role/profession at the school. In some circumstances the provision of such information could damage the reputation of the school and/or the relevant profession.
- l) Teachers must at all times be mindful of the Teachers' Standards applicable to their profession and act in accordance with those standards. The Teacher Standards make clear that a teacher must uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour both within and outside of school, by ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law. Any breach of the Teacher Standards will be considered a matter of misconduct and may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken.
- m) Adults must not request or respond to a request for any personal information from or about a pupil at the school.
- n) Adults must devote the whole of their time and attention to their duties during working hours. Personal use of the internet is only permitted during lunchtimes or break times and any breach of this provision will be regarded as a conduct matter and disciplinary action taken as appropriate.
- o) Confidentiality issues must be considered at all times in relation to social networking and the use of social media. All employees are bound by a common law duty of fidelity. There are also other laws which protect the school's confidential information which adults working in school may have access to during the course of their work. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, person identifiable information for example pupil and employee records, information protected by the Data Protection Act 1998 and information provided by the school in the expectation of confidence including information about the school, pupils and the families of pupils, the school's staffing or business plans, and any other commercially or politically sensitive information.

- p) Adults must ensure that they do not provide, publish share or otherwise disclose any confidential information about themselves or about the school and the wider school community in breach of their duty of fidelity or in breach of other laws relating to confidentiality and privacy including the Human Rights Act 1998, and the Data Protection Act 1998.
- q) Adults must ensure they understand their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and under the school's Equality Policy. Breaches of the Equality Act 2010 or the school's Equality Policy through the use of social networking or social media will be considered a serious conduct matter which may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Adults should also be aware that they could be held personally liable for their own discriminatory actions under the Equality Act 2010. If, for example an adult were to harass a co-worker online or engage in a discriminatory act in relation to one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, this may result in legal action being taken against them.
- r) Adults should also be aware that there are other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright which may apply to information, published or posted by them on social media and which could lead to legal action being taken against them.
- s) All concerns about communications, social contact or social media/social networking issues must be raised with the Headteacher or a member of the SLT immediately.
- t) Adults should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People'.
- u) Adults are accountable for and must take responsibility for all information published or shared by them on social media websites and for any views expressed by them on any such sites, whether in their working time or in their personal time and which may come into the public domain. Adults should be aware that their use of social media and any information published by them may be monitored by the Headteacher, members of the school's Senior Leadership Team and/or members of the school's Governing Body. By using the school's IT resources and facilities adults give the school consent to monitor their activities.
- v) adults must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate; adults must not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work and personal interests.

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 Procedure.

6. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the school newsletter, website, letters and verbal discussions.

The school Facebook page will be used to inform parents and carers of what is happening in school. The school Facebook site will be a one-way communication tool and parents should

be encouraged not to ask questions using the Facebook page or through the Facebook messenger option. All communication must be made through official school channels including any complaints.

Personal phones and cameras are not allowed to be used by parents/ carers while they are on school premises, unless authorised to do so by the Headteacher (e.g. at school concerts etc). Parents/carers must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community. The LA Legal Team and/or police will be contacted should this be the case.

If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform (e.g. Seesaw) where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use. Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately. 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.

7. Cyberbullying and Trolling

"Cyberbullying" can be defined as "the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them."

If cyberbullying takes place, adults should keep records of the abuse, texts, e-mails, website or instant messages and should not delete the said texts, e-mails or messages. Adults are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and to be careful to record the time, date and location of the site.

Trolling" can be defined as "circumstances where a person shows discord on the internet by starting arguments or upsetting people by posting inflammatory messages in an online community with the deliberate intent of provoking readers into an emotional response;"

If trolling occurs, adults are advised to take screen prints of messages and should not delete any evidence of trolling.

Adults must report all incidents of cyberbullying and/or trolling to the Headteacher. Any such incidents will be taken very seriously. Adults who have been subjected to cyberbullying or trolling may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representative.

8. The Prevent Duty

Schools have a vital role to play in equipping children and young people to stay safe online, both in and outside school and also in protecting pupils from the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Terrorist organisations are attempting to radicalise and recruit young people through extensive use of social media and the internet. As with any other online risks of harm, every adult in school (teachers and teaching assistants in particular) must be aware of the risks posed by the online activity of extremist and terrorist groups.

For the avoidance of doubt, if any adult working in school has a concern that a particular pupil or group of pupils is at risk of radicalisation or terrorist exploitation, through social media or otherwise, they must immediately contact the Headteacher and follow the school's normal safeguarding procedures, including discussing the matter with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and where deemed necessary, with Trafford Children's First Response Team at the Local Authority and the police.

9. Managing accounts

Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a Twitter account, or a School Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the School 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 two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

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

10. Monitoring

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only 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

11. 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.

12. Use of images

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

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's GDPR Policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes **must** be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Children should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.

13. Breaches of Policy and Other Issues

Any breach of this policy and the duties, responsibilities, professional standards and legal obligations referred to will be regarded as a serious matter and action including disciplinary action in appropriate circumstances will be taken by the Headteacher (or the Governing Body). In serious cases involving employees this may lead to dismissal without notice on the grounds of gross misconduct.

Where there has been a breach of this policy, the school will also take whatever action is considered appropriate in order to protect the reputation and integrity of the school and the wider school community.

Adults must be aware that any breach of this policy involving a breach of the laws, professional codes or other statutory provisions referred to in this policy may result in legal or other action being taken against them by a body or person other than the school.

14. Policy Links

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies in particular:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Twitter Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Equality Statement

Appendix 1

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- **'Nothing'** on social media is truly private.
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts.
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy.
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint.
- Keep your personal information private.
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to.
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem.

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school.
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views.
- Make it clear who is posting content.
- Use an appropriate and professional tone.
- Be respectful to all parties.
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author.
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner.
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion.
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process.
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible.

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute.
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material.
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation.
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content.
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances.