

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School



Social Networking Policy

Introduction

At St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, we are aware of the growing culture and use of social media by pupils, staff, parents, governors and the wider community. We recognise that while it can be a useful tool for networking, it also brings with it potential dangers and challenges. At St Matthew's we are dedicated to ensuring our pupils, parents, staff and wider community are equipped with the skills to use social media safely and ensure that no social media interactions could bring the school's reputation into question. This policy provides guidance for teaching staff, governors and leadership on appropriate conduct on social media sites and ways in which they can protect their digital identity. Throughout the policy social media will be referred to in general with some specific requirements for the two currently largest social media sites: Facebook and Twitter.

Aims

To ensure that the use of social networking:

- Does not bring the school into disrepute
- Does not bring the teacher into disrepute
- Does not expose the school to legal liability
- Reflects 'safer internet' practices
- Minimises risks associated with the personal use of social media by professionals
- Reflects the school's standard of behaviour and staff code of conduct

Types of social media

This policy refers to all use of social networking including but not limited to...

- Micro blogging and full blogs e.g. Twitter and Wordpress
- Discussion forums e.g. TES forum
- Media sharing sites e.g. YouTube and Instagram
- Collaborative spaces e.g. Facebook

School Facebook Page

- The school operates a school Facebook page which is monitored and edited by an assigned individual in school.
- Any likes and follows remain anonymous and therefore safeguards our pupils and their families.
- Any content uploaded by school is subject to approval and our safeguarding policy in line with the consent documentation our parents sign.
- Any inappropriate comments or messages are to be deleted and reported by the assigned individual to Facebook, the Esafety coordinator and the safeguarding team in school.
- This must not be accessed using school equipment or during school hours by anyone other than the assigned individual, the Esafety coordinator and the safeguarding team.
- Staff may follow the page but if contact is made by any parents they should refer to our school policy on how to respond to friend requests from pupils or their family.

Social Networking on site.

- Staff must not access a personal social media accounts using school equipment on site unless given permission by the head teacher.
- You Tube may be accessed on the school premises by teachers only who have pre-risk assessed the content to be shown. Children must never access You Tube on the school site.
- Staff should only access work email accounts at school unless permission is granted by the head teacher in line with the Esafety policy.
- Any other social media sites not detailed in this policies granted use list should not be accessed using school onsite devices by any stakeholders including but not limited to; teachers, governors, pupils and parents.

Social media where use is granted on school site

- You Tube- only by members of staff
- TES teaching forums
- Teaching union forums
- The school learning platform on Microsoft office
- Personal email accounts only in line with the guidance set out in the esafety policy.

Any other social media sites which staff require access to must have permission granted by the head teacher and/or esafety coordinator.

Staff conduct on social media

- Staff should not disclose any personal information through social media such as phone number, email or home address.
- Staff should use social media in a transparent way ensuring that any posts or images will not bring the school's reputation or the teaching profession into question. They should use the appropriate content section of this policy to ensure their use of social media remains transparent.
- Staff should not seek to 'friend' a pupil or their family member on any social media site.
- Teachers should be aware that if a pupil attempts to "friend" a teacher on Facebook, depending on the teacher's privacy settings, this attempt to "friend" might result in more of the teacher's profile being visible to the pupil, until the teacher "rejects" the "friend request". Teachers need to be aware that many pupils will be savvy to this exploitation of Facebook's "friend" procedure to try and access more of the teacher's photos and comments.
- It must be remembered that uninitiated contact, or "friending" does not constitute an interaction by the teacher – only a response does. This is worth considering since some forms of social media do not involve an interaction between a pupil and teacher even if a pupil "friends" a teacher or vice versa.
- Staff should not accept friend requests from pupils or their family members unless the person in question is directly related to the member of staff or known to the member of staff outside of the professional work relationship. Even in these circumstances staff are advised to take precautions to limit accessibility to their account e.g. group visibility settings on Facebook.
- Teachers need to ensure that content on social media profiles does not breach a school, LA or regulatory body code of conduct with regard to the professionalism of a teacher and acceptable conduct.

- Teachers need to maintain appropriate confidentiality with regard to school matters, pupil matters and data protection. This includes keeping pupil matters off personal profiles, not using photographs of pupils for which permission has not been granted, and not referring to private data, for example pupils' exam results.
- Teachers need to be aware that negative and critical comments regarding other colleagues, pupils, parents or the school might be construed to be defamatory. The potential audience of social media might result in "substantial publication" a pre requisite to libel and defamation action being taken against a teacher. Even if the comments could be regarded as "fair comment", or true, the nature and method of making the comment via social media could well be considered misconduct. Grievances are best dealt with via union reps or employment law solicitors, not Facebook or Twitter.
- If teachers want to refer to events relating to their school, in a positive light, for example a successful school event, it is best to do so by "sharing" or "linking to" a 3rd party news report which is already in the public domain.

Acceptable content for staff

Using social media always has the potential for any message, interaction, post, photo or movie to be made public to the widest audience. Therefore, any use of social media needs this to be borne in mind.

For example, when considering what to post on Facebook:

- Would you be happy for this to be pinned up on the notice board by the school gates?
- Would you be happy for it to appear in the local newspaper?
- Would you be happy for your Facebook movies or photos to appear as a trailer prior to films at the local multiplex?
- Would you be feel comfortable for your comments to be displayed in a whole school assembly?

If the answer to all of the above is yes – then it is likely that your use of social networking is transparent and appropriate.

If the answer to any of the above is no, it is worth considering that the audience and reach for any interaction on your social networking site is much bigger than any of the four scenarios above. For example, if you have 500 friends on Facebook, and each of them has 500 friends then the potential audience of your posts on Facebook is 250,000 people, equivalent to the population of Leicester.

To ensure complete transparency and to provide protection against false allegations regarding Facebook, it is possible to for teachers to download a record of all their interaction on Facebook.

Full details are on this page: <http://en-gb.facebook.com/help/131112897028467/>

A similar record of interaction for Twitter is possible by signing up to the <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20170160-downloading-your-twitter-archive#> service.

Pupil use of Social Media

- Pupils should be advised that most social networking sites are aimed at children 13 years and over. Pupils should be educated in why these age guidelines are in place and why they should be adhered to.

- Pupils should not access social media sites which are not granted permission within this policy, including through the use of mobile devices independent of the school network.
- Pupils should only access KS2 class blogs following the guidelines set out in the Social Networking on Site section of this policy and in accordance with the school esafety policy.
- Safe use of social media forms the part of the esafety curriculum and should be taught in line with the expectations set out in the esafety policy and Internet Safety Progression Ladder.
- Pupils must sign an acceptable internet usage agreement in accordance with the esafety policy.
- Pupils should avoid attempting to access or view private staff social network accounts.

Staff Training

- Staff will receive annual training in social media networking from the esafety coordinator who will focus on new sites, updates in settings, current issues effecting social media usage and presenting a transparent and reputable digital identity.
- Staff will also receive 1 x 30 minute annual training in social media usage.
- Any relevant updates throughout the year will be provided where necessary through staff briefing, staff meetings and the learning platform.
- Staff have also signed an acceptable use policy which links to both this and the esafety policy guidelines.

Working with parents

- Parents are provided with information surrounding privacy settings and safe use of social media through information stands and the annual 'meet the teacher' and termly parent's evenings.
- Any important updates are provided through the school newsletter and website.
- Safety advice pages for parents can be found on the school website and KS2 class blogs. These contain links to information surrounding the safe use of social media.
- Parents are made aware of the acceptable internet use agreement required by their children.

Recommended privacy settings for staff

- Facebook offers specific advice to teachers regarding privacy settings:
<https://www.facebook.com/education>
- This page details how to you separate lists of "friends" into different categories regarding privacy and the visibility of your profile on facebook:
<http://en-gb.facebook.com/help/?page=175076589213424>
- This page clearly explains tagging:
<http://en-gb.facebook.com/about/tagging>
- This section details how to turn it off to ensure people cannot tag you in Facebook photos:
<http://en-gb.facebook.com/help/267508226592992/>

Facebook's advice: "If you'd like to review posts and photos you're tagged in before they go on your profile (timeline), turn on [Profile \(Timeline\) Review](#)."

- Click the account menu at the top right of any Facebook page and choose See More Settings.
- Under the Timeline and Tagging section, identify the Who can add things to my timeline? section.
- Click edit next to Review posts friends tag you in before they appear on your timeline.
- Select Enabled.

If you have Profile (Timeline) Review off, then tags from friends are automatically approved. Whether you have Profile (Timeline) Review on or not, tags from non-friends require your approval before they go on your profile (timeline).

This page details how to remove unwanted photos from Facebook:

<http://en-gb.facebook.com/help/contact/274459462613911>

And this page details how to prevent unwanted people viewing your own photos on Facebook:

<http://en-gb.facebook.com/help/385017548218624/>

This page details how to deal with pictures copied without permission on Twitter:

<https://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/148-policy-information/articles/15795-copyright-and-dmca-policy#>

This page details how to remove private information on Twitter:

<https://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/166-safety-center/articles/18368-safety-private-information#>

This page details how to report other violations to Twitter and remove content:

<https://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/122-reporting-violations/articles/15789-how-to-report-violations#>

It is worth noting that Twitter very rarely remove tweets or suspend accounts based on user content complaints.

General summary of advice for Teachers

Teachers' use of personal social networking should avoid:

- publishing content which is defamatory, abusive, discriminatory, in breach of data protection or otherwise brings the school into disrepute
- promoting extreme political, religious, racist or hate views which might impact on a teacher's ability to teach within equal opportunities guidelines
- Posting material which is in breach of school codes of conduct or school policies relating to staff
- Posting material which discusses confidential school matters relating to staff, pupils or parents
- Initiating contact with a pupil or "friending" a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18

- Use of social networks in “directed time”, or use of school ICT equipment in non-directed time.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to monitor and update the school’s social networking policy on a regular basis, so that we can take account improvements made in our practice. We will therefore review this policy annually or earlier if necessary.