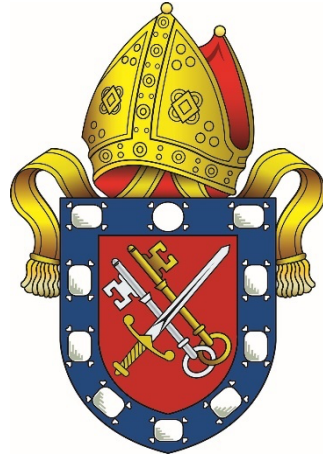
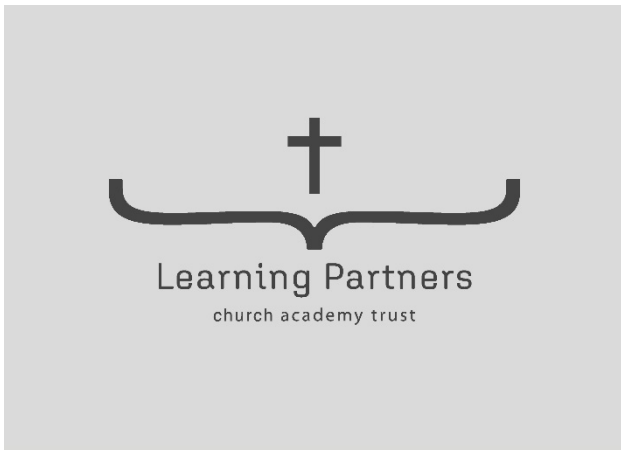




PYRFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

Approved	9 July 2025
Reviewed	Annually
Next Review Date	July 2026
Leader responsible for policy and practice	Headteacher

Introduction

The school acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with the potentially inappropriate use of social networking sites.

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage with and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our personal and professional reputation and that of the school.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance, so as to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. The policy covers the use of social networking by all school stakeholders.

Social Media Applications

Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. Applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs, for example Blogger
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com and mumsnet.com
- Collaborative space, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram
- Media sharing services, for example Youtube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter
- Instant messaging services, for example SMS.

This policy

- Applies to all staff and 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, which will in turn support safer working practices.
- Sets clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use to minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against the school and adults who work with pupils.
- Gives a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken.
- 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 are likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

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 a 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.

Organisational Control Roles & Responsibilities

- **Headteacher**
 - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
 - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy.
 - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
 - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
 - Approve professional communications account creation and approve all posts prior to going live.
- **SLT: IT technician/ lead social media member**
 - Create the account following SLT approval
 - Store account details, including passwords securely
 - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
 - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)
- **Staff**
 - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies.
 - Attend appropriate training.

Process for creating new accounts

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work or communications, e.g. a PTA Facebook page, an English department Twitter account, or a class WhatsApp group.

The school must consider the following factors before discussing the creation of social media accounts with the Headteacher:

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Where parents and carers create social media accounts such as class WhatsApp groups to convey reminders and class updates, it can be hugely beneficial to have rules to set expectations of the group culture early on. For example:

Group Rules from the Admins

1. Be Kind and Courteous to All: let's encourage one another and treat everyone with respect.
2. No Advertising: try to avoid promoting your or someone else's business.
3. Stick to the Topic: this forum is for comments related to class activity and PTA events. Please avoid posts which are likely to cause a high degree of controversy, conflict or distress; or even those which 'peacefully vent'. Please contact the school directly to raise any concerns/issues about your child's education. Off-topic events are likely to be removed.
4. Reporting: if you see a post/comment that offends you, or you consider it to break the rules, please contact the admins directly.

Monitoring

Monitoring School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). 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.

Behaviour

- 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.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy
- Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- 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 policy.

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.

Handling abusive or inappropriate posts

- When acting on behalf of the school, lead social media member will handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity and will communicate with SLT when necessary.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

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 Data Protection Policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should 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, or on platforms such as Seesaw. Students 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.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Parents are asked to follow the guidance in the 'Communications and social media' guidance, available on the school's website, and the following 'personal use' policy.

Personal use

- **Staff**
 - Personal communications are those made via a 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.
 - Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.
- **Pupil/Students**
 - Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.
 - The school's curriculum should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
 - Pupils/students of Pyrford Primary School are generally too young to meet minimum age requirements set by social media platforms, and should not have accounts. However, where this does occur, pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy.
- **Parents/Carers**
 - The school has created guidance which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This is available on the school website.
 - Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. 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.

Monitoring posts about the school

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to proactively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.
- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.