

Date: March 2023  
Review date: March 2024  
Responsibility: MW

# Bishop Challoner School



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



## Bishop Challoner School

### Social Media Policy

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the anti-bullying and cyberbullying policies**

This policy sets out the principles that all staff of the school are expected to follow when using social media. It is communicated to all staff including recently appointed staff and is available in the staff handbook.

#### **Introduction**

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school and sets out the principles that all staff members at the school are expected to follow when using social media.

The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded.

Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate. 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, and UK libel and defamation laws as well as other legislation.

This policy applies to personal web space such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, WhatsApp, SnapChat), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

#### **Related Policies and Compliance**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, ICT policies including the Staff ICT Acceptable Use Agreement policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff members should never use social media in a way that breaches any of the school's other policies. If an internet post would breach any of the school's policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff members are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach our ICT Policies;
- breach any obligations contained in those policies relating to confidentiality;
- breach our Disciplinary Policy or procedures;
- harass or bully other staff members or pupils in any way;
- unlawfully discriminate against other staff members, pupils or third parties; or
- breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.

Members of staff who breach any of the above policies whilst using social media or any online forum will be subject to disciplinary action under the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

### **Personal Use of Social Media**

When using social media for personal use, all staff members must comply with the following principles:

1. Members of staff must not identify themselves as employees of school on their personal social media profiles or in their personal webspace. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
2. Members of staff must not use social media to say anything negative or derogatory about the school or to defame or disparage the school, other staff members, pupils or their family members or any third party.
3. Members of staff must not express opinions on behalf of the school or purport to express opinions on behalf of the school via their own personal social media.
4. Staff members must not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or pupils of the school through any personal social medium unless the parents or pupils are family members.
5. Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils that they receive on their personal social media accounts. Any communication received from children or 'friend requests' on any personal social media sites must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, responsible for child protection, Kate Brooker, or Alison Barker in Kate Brooker's absence.
6. Any information that members of staff have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues and other parties must not be discussed on their personal social media profiles or other personal webspace.
7. Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils, their families, staff members wearing uniforms or clothing with school logos or images identifying school premises must not be published on any member of staff's social media profiles or other personal webspace.

Members of staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts and to keep their passwords completely confidential.

Personal use of social media is never permitted during working hours or by means of the school's computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems.

### **Using Social Media or Communicating on Behalf of the School**

All email communication between staff members, pupils, parents or members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.

Staff members must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in social media activities on behalf of the school without prior authorisation.

Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another. Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage. However, the school recognises that there are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support pupil learning. For example, the school has an official Twitter account and certain courses may require the use of blogs for assessment.

When using social media for educational purposes, the staff member must follow the following practices:

1. Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff and should be linked to an official school email account.

2. Prior to creating the social media site, consideration should be given as to purpose of using social media and whether the overall investment required from the member of staff is likely to achieve the desired outcome.
3. Members of staff must ensure that any social media site created for pupil use complies with the site owners' minimum user age requirement.
4. Care must be given to ensure that any links to external sites from the social media site created are appropriate and safe for the intended users.
5. Staff members must also give consideration to how the success of the site will be evaluated to assess whether the site has achieved the proposed objectives.
6. Staff members must ensure that the sites they create or contribute to for work purposes conform to the Good Practice Guidance for the Providers of Social Networking and Other User Interactive Services (Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, 2008).
7. Staff members must seek approval for creation of sites for work purposes and the contents of such sites, whether hosted by the school or hosted by a third party such as a social networking site, from their line manager and the Headteacher.
8. Staff members must never give out their personal information such as home contact details or home email addresses on these sites and they must never express personal opinions on these sites.
9. Sites created for and contributed to by pupils must have the strongest privacy settings to prevent breaches of confidentiality. Pupils and other participants in sites must not be able to be identified.
10. At all times, staff members that create social media sites for work purposes must stay within the law and be aware that child protection, privacy, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright law may apply to the content of social media.
11. Staff members must not make 'friends' or connections with external organisations on any social media site created for work purposes without the prior approval of their line manager and the Headteacher.
12. Staff members should not engage in private messages with pupils on social media sites created for work purposes.
13. If pupils disclose information or display behaviour that raises safeguarding or other concerns on social media sites created for work purposes, the DSL and Headteacher and the appropriate authorities must be informed immediately.
14. Any inappropriate comment or behaviour likely to cause extreme offence, for example racist or homophobic insults, or likely to put a young person or adult at risk of harm must never be posted on social media sites by staff members of pupils. Any such comments should be removed immediately, reported to the Headteacher and appropriate authorities should be informed.
15. The content and postings on social media sites created for work purposes must be moderated on a regular basis and is the responsibility of the member of staff that sets up or initiates the site.
16. Photographs of children who are on the Photographic/Recordings exclusion list may not be used.
17. Staff must not post anything on a social media site that may lead to valid parental complaints.

### **Dealing with Incidents of Online (Cyber) Bullying**

All cases of online bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy. The school can take action with reference to any incident that takes place outside school hours if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school
- Poses a threat to a member of the school community
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school, or its employees/Governing Body

### **Monitoring Internet Use**

The school will monitor usage of its internet and email services without prior notification to or authorisation from any member of staff or other users. Such monitoring may include, but will not be limited to social media postings and activities.

Members of staff and other users of the school's email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

**Breaches of this Policy**

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure up to and including dismissal.

Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with the school's investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

**Trustees of the Personnel Committee and Headteacher**

**Review Date: March 2023**

**Reviewed by: MW**

**Next Review: March 2024**

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I ..... (block capitals please) have received the Bishop Challoner Social Media Policy and

- have read the Social Media Policy.
- agree to follow the guidelines and carry out the procedures outlined in the Social Media Policy.

Signed .....

Date .....