



St Mary's  
Catholic Primary School and Nursery

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

St Mary's understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

We are committed to:

- encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents and pupils in support of the school's mission, values and objectives
- protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media
- preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media
- protecting our staff from cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour
- providing e-safety information for pupils and parents

### **Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- DfE (2018) 'Data protection: a tool kit for schools'
- The Data Protection Act 2018

We implement this policy in accordance with the following school policies and documents:

- Acceptable Use Policy – Staff
- Staff Code of Conduct
- E-Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Child Protection Policy

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Head Teacher Responsibilities:**

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards concerning the use of social media.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- In conjunction with the governing body, handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.
- Taking steps to minimise the amount of misplaced or malicious allegations in relation to social media use.
- Working alongside the computing leads (Miss L Hough & Mrs H Steele) and the Data Protection Lead (DPL) (Mrs L Lee) to ensure we implement the appropriate security measures and comply with the GDPR.

### **Staff Responsibilities:**

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy, the Acceptable Use Policy for Staff and Staff Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- Reporting any social media misuse by staff, pupils or parents to the Head Teacher immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home.
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both themselves and their children.
- Following e-safety advice and guidance issued by the school wherever possible.

## **Pupil Responsibilities:**

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Pupil Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online.

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines “**social media**” as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, such as Twitter

For the purpose of this policy, “cyber bullying” is defined any social media or communication technology intentionally used to bully an individual or group, including the posting or sharing of messages, images or videos.

For the purpose of this policy, “members of the school community” is defined as any teacher, member of support staff, pupil, ex-pupil, governor or parent of a pupil.

## **Data Protection Principles**

- The school will obtain consent from parents using the Images and Videos Parental Consent Form. This will confirm whether parents provide their consent to post images and videos of a pupil on social media platforms. St Mary’s maintains a record of consent, which details the consent provided. The DPL is responsible for ensuring the consent record remains up-to-date.
- Parents are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents must inform the school in writing.
- Consent can be provided for certain principles only, for example only images of a pupil are permitted to be posted, and not videos. This is explicitly clear on the consent from provided.
- Where parents withdraw or amend their consent, it will not affect the processing of any images or videos prior to the amendment or withdrawal of the consent. Processing will cease in line with parent and pupil requirements following this. However, St Mary’s will, wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, take measures to remove any posts before consent was withdrawn or amended, such as removing an image from a social media site.

- St Mary's will only post images and videos of pupils for whom we have received consent.
- Only school-owned devices will be used to take images and videos of the school community, which have been pre-approved by the School Business Manager or Head Teacher for use.
- When posting images and videos of pupils, the school will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of identification if appropriate.
- The school will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms.
- We will never use pupils' full names alongside any videos or images in which they are present.
- We will only post appropriate images and videos of pupils in which they are suitably dressed, i.e. it would not be suitable to display an image of a pupil in swimwear.
- When posting on social media, the school will use group or class images or videos with general labels, e.g. 'sports day'.
- Before posting on social media, staff will:
  - Refer to the consent record log to ensure we have received consent for that pupil and for the exact processing activities required.
  - Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.
- The School Business Manager will handle any breaches of the data protection principles.
- Consent provided for the use of images and videos only applies to school accounts. Staff, pupils and parents are not permitted to post any imagery or videos on personal accounts.

## **Social Media Use – Staff**

### **School Accounts**

- We will not share any school social media passwords with any unauthorised persons, including pupils, unless otherwise permitted by the Head teacher.
- Staff will ensure any posts are positive in nature and relevant to pupils, the work of staff, the school or any achievements.
- Staff will ensure a member of the Senior Leadership Team has checked the content before posting this on social media.
- If staff wish to post reminders e.g. returning slips for a school trip, staff will seek permission from a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting this.
- Staff will adhere to the data protection principles outlined in Section 4 of this policy at all times.
- Staff will not post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.

- If inappropriate content is accessed online, a report form will be completed and passed on to the computing leads. The school retain the right to monitor staff members' internet usage in line with the E-Safety/ Acceptable Use Policies.

### **Personal Accounts**

- Staff members will not access social media platforms during lesson times.
- Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts, unless it is beneficial to the material taught – prior permission will be sought from the Head Teacher, Team Leader or other member of SLT.
- Staff members are permitted to use social media during break times.
- Staff will avoid using social media in front of pupils.
- Staff will not “friend” or otherwise pupils or parents through their personal social media accounts.
- Staff members will not provide their home address, telephone or mobile number, social networking details or email addresses to pupils or parents – any contact with pupils or parents will be carried out through authorised school contact channels.
- Staff members will ensure they apply the necessary privacy controls to personal accounts.
- Staff members will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of St Mary's school on their personal social media accounts.
- No staff member will post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.
- Where staff members use social media in a personal capacity, they will ensure it is clear that views are personal and are not that of St Mary's school.
- Staff members will not post any information that could identify a pupil, class or the school – this includes any images, videos and personal information.
- Staff will not take any posts, images or videos from social media that belong to the school for their own personal use.
- Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- We will take breaches of this policy by members of staff seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal.
- Staff members will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.
- Staff members will regularly check their online presence for negative content via search engines.
- Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community via social media by members of staff are dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

- Staff members will not leave a computer or other device logged in when away from their desk or save/ share passwords.
- Staff members will use their school email address for school business and personal email address for their private correspondence; the two should not be mixed.

### **Social Media Use – Pupils And Parents**

- Pupils will not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity.
- Pupils and parents will not attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Pupils and parents are only permitted to be affiliates of school social media accounts.
- It is acknowledged that staff may have genuine friendships and social contact with parents of pupils, independent of the professional relationship.
- Pupils and parents will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Pupils and parents will not post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils.
- Pupils are instructed not to sign up to any social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil’s age.
- If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it will be reported to a teacher.
- Pupils are not permitted to use the school’s Wi-Fi network to access any social media platforms unless prior permission has been sought from the Head Teacher, and the School Business Manager has ensured appropriate network security measures are applied.
- Parents are not permitted to use the school’s Wi-Fi network to access any social media platforms on personal devices. Social media access on school-owned devices may be permitted.
- St Mary’s will take breaches of this policy seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution, or exclusion.

### **Blocked Content**

- In accordance with the school’s Data and E-Security Prevention, Cheshire East will install firewalls on the school’s network to prevent access to certain websites.
- Attempts made to circumvent the network’s firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment, other than with close supervision.
- We will report inappropriate content accessed on the school’s computers to the computing leads or School Business Manager who will ensure the site is blocked.

- The school retains the right to monitor staff and pupil access to websites when using the school's network and on school-owned devices.
- Staff may make a request to access erroneously blocked content by making an enquiry through the IT log, the Head teacher will then review the request.

### **Cyber Bullying**

- St Mary's takes cyber bullying incidents seriously. We will handle any reports of cyber bullying on social media platforms by pupils in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- We will handle allegations of cyber bullying from staff members in accordance with the Whistle Blowing Policy.
- Staff members will not respond or retaliate to cyber bullying incidents. Staff will report incidents as inappropriate, and the Head teacher will provide the appropriate support.
- Staff will save evidence from the incident on CPOMS, including screen prints of messages or web pages, and the time and date of the incident.
- Where the perpetrator is a current pupil or colleague, we will handle most incidents through the school's own disciplinary procedures.
- Where the perpetrator is an adult, in nearly all cases, a member of the SLT will invite the victim to a meeting to address their concerns. Where appropriate, we will ask the perpetrator to remove the offensive content.
- If the perpetrator refuses to comply, it is up to the school to decide what to do next. This may include contacting the internet service provider in question through their reporting mechanisms, if the offensive content breaches their terms and conditions.
- If the material is threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitutes a hate crime, the school will consider whether we should contact the police.
- As part of the school's ongoing commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of the computing and PHSCE curriculum.

### **Training**

At St Mary's, we recognise that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyber bullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

- Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Social Media Policy as part of their induction.
- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

- Pupils will be educated regularly about e-safety and appropriate social media use through a variety of mediums including assemblies, PHSCE lessons and cross-curricular links.
- We will provide pupils with information to reinforce their e-safety knowledge.
- Parents will be given e-safety and social media advice and guidance, and provided with relevant resources/links.
- We will refresh training for all pupils, staff and parents in light of any significant incidents or changes.