

Social Media Policy



“Our school is a place where we all come together as one community to learn, have fun and make lasting friendships all under God’s love and care”

Approved by:	Governing Body/SLT	Date: May 2026
Last reviewed on:	May 2026	
Next review due by:	May 2027	

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out expectations for the safe, responsible and appropriate use of social media across the school community, including staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors, contractors and volunteers.

It aims to:

- Provide clear guidance on acceptable social media use
- Establish expectations for online behaviour and engagement
- Safeguard pupils and staff
- Protect the school's reputation
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements

This policy applies:

- To both professional and personal use of social media
- During and outside school/work hours
- On school-owned and personal devices

All users must comply with this policy alongside other school policies, including safeguarding, data protection, behaviour, and acceptable use policies.

1.1 Definition of Social Media

Social media includes any platform that enables users to create, share or interact with content. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok
- LinkedIn
- WhatsApp and other messaging services
- Blogs, forums, wikis and review platforms

2. Key Risks and Legal Considerations

Improper use of social media may lead to:

- Breaches of safeguarding responsibilities
- Disclosure of confidential or personal data
- Bullying, harassment or discrimination
- Defamation or reputational damage
- Legal breaches (e.g. data protection, copyright, equality law)

Examples of misconduct include:

- Sharing confidential school information
- Posting offensive or discriminatory content
- Misrepresenting the school
- Engaging in online disputes involving the school

Breaches may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

3. Use of Official School Social Media

3.1 School Accounts

The school's official social media accounts include:

Instagram – stlawrencefeltham and Facebook – St Lawrence Catholic Primary School

- Only authorised staff may access or post
- All posts must follow school approval processes
- Staff must not attempt to access accounts without permission
- These accounts are managed by the Headteacher. Staff members who have not been authorised by the Headteacher to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.
- If you have suggestions for something you'd like to appear on our school social media channel(s), please contact the Headteacher.

3.2 Content Guidelines (Detailed)

The school may post:

- Updates (e.g. closures, timetable changes, staffing updates)
- Reminders (deadlines, events, trips, activities)
- Promotion of school events and achievements
- Educational resources and guidance
- Job vacancies and volunteer opportunities
- Newsletters and communications
- Celebrations of pupil and staff success
- Cultural, seasonal or community messages
- Invitations for feedback

The school will not post:

- Names or identifiable information without consent
- Personal data or confidential information
- Content directed at individuals
- Political opinions or endorsements
- Commercial advertising (unless school-related)

- Links to personal staff accounts
- Any inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory material

3.3 Consent and Safeguarding

- Written parental consent must be obtained before sharing pupil images or information
- Posts must avoid identifying pupils unless explicit consent is given
- Extra care must be taken to ensure:
 - No visible names on work or badges
 - No identifying background details
- Consent must be platform-specific where applicable

3.4 Moderation

Staff managing accounts will:

- Monitor activity regularly
- Remove inappropriate content as soon as possible

This includes:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments
- Spam or promotional posts
- Posts containing personal data
- Requests for donations or unrelated advertising

Where appropriate:

- Concerns will be addressed in line with the complaints procedure
- Repeated breaches may result in users being blocked

All content must be age-appropriate for the school community.

3.5 Engagement with Other Accounts

The school:

- May follow users who follow the school
- May “like” pages with non-commercial relevance

This does not imply endorsement.

4. Personal Use of Social Media by Staff

4.1 Professional Expectations

Staff must:

- Maintain professional boundaries at all times
- Protect confidentiality and sensitive information
- Consider reputational risks
- Use appropriate privacy settings

Staff are personally responsible for content they post and should assume it may be publicly accessible indefinitely.

4.2 Prohibited Activities

Staff must not:

- Use personal accounts for school business
- Communicate with pupils via personal accounts
- Accept friend/follow requests from pupils, past or present.
- Share information about pupils, staff or parents
- Post images of pupils
- Criticise or complain about the school, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Make statements that could be interpreted as representing the school
- Use school branding without permission
- Use work email addresses for personal social media

4.3 Use During Working Time

- Personal use is not permitted during working hours unless authorised
- School IT systems must not be used for personal social media

4.4 Safeguarding Responsibilities

- Any safeguarding concern identified online must be reported to the DSL
- Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the staff behaviour policy.
- Any communication received from current pupils (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.
- Staff should not also not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via official school channels).

4.5 Reputation and Conduct

Staff must not:

- Post defamatory or disparaging comments about:
 - The school
 - Staff, pupils, parents or stakeholders
- Engage in behaviour that could damage the school's reputation

If referencing the school:

- Staff must state views are their own

5. Personal Use of Social Media by Pupils

The school encourages pupils to use social media responsibly and safely. Pupils are expected to:

- Be respectful towards staff, other pupils and the wider school community
- Communicate appropriately and responsibly online
- Report any concerns through appropriate school channels

Pupils must not:

- Post harmful, abusive or inappropriate content
- Share images or personal information about others without consent
- Use social media to complain about staff or the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other pupils or parents/carers
- Engage in bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour online
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5.1 – Social Media and Age-Appropriate Use

St Lawrence Catholic Primary School recognises the growing national concern regarding the impact of social media on children's wellbeing, mental health, safety and development.

The school supports current government guidance and national campaigns that encourage children to delay access to social media platforms until they are developmentally ready and meet the minimum age requirements set by law and platform providers.

The school strongly discourages the use of social media accounts by primary-aged children and encourages parents/carers to delay access to social media for as long as possible.

Many social media platforms have a minimum age requirement of 13 years, including but not limited to Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter).

The school expects parents/carers to:

- Be aware of any social media platforms their child is accessing.
- Ensure children do not hold accounts where they do not meet the minimum age requirements.
- Use parental controls and monitoring tools where appropriate.
- Regularly review privacy settings and online activity.
- Support age-appropriate use of technology and online communication.
- Encourage healthy limits on screen time and device use.

The school will:

- Deliver a comprehensive online safety curriculum through Computing, PSHE and safeguarding education.
- Promote age-appropriate and responsible use of technology.
- Educate pupils about the risks associated with social media, including cyberbullying, grooming, misinformation, harmful content and excessive screen use.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers where concerns arise regarding a child's online activity.
- Take safeguarding action where online activity places a child or others at risk.

Where concerns arise regarding underage use of social media, the school may discuss these concerns with parents/carers as part of its safeguarding responsibilities.

5.2 – Smartphones and Internet-Enabled Devices

The school supports national efforts to reduce the risks associated with unrestricted access to smartphones and social media for primary-aged children.

Pupils who bring mobile phones to school must comply with the school's Mobile Phone Policy.

Mobile phones:

- Must remain switched off throughout the school day and handed in to Y5 / Y6 teachers.
- Must not be used on the school site without staff permission.
- Must not be used to access social media during the school day.

- May be confiscated where used in breach of school rules.

The school encourages parents/carers to carefully consider whether a child requires a smartphone and to explore alternative devices where communication is the primary purpose.

6. Personal Use of Social Media by Parents/Carers

Parents/carers should:

- Model safe and appropriate behaviour
- Be respectful towards and about, members of staff and the school at all times.
- Be respectful of and about other parents/carers and other pupils at all times.

They must not:

- Post complaints about staff, pupils or the school
- Share images of other children
- Discuss incidents involving other pupils or parents/carers

Concerns or complaints should be raised via official school procedures so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedures.

6.1 Messaging Platforms (e.g. WhatsApp)

The school recognises that parents/carers may use messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp) to communicate with each other.

However:

- No year group or class-based WhatsApp (or similar) groups are run, managed or moderated by school staff
- Any such groups are independent of the school
- Social media and messaging platforms also present risks and limitations that must be considered
- Messages of a defamatory nature will not be tolerated under any circumstances
- All members of a group may be implicated in inappropriate content, not only the individual who originally posts it but also those who respond or engage
- Where a member of staff can be identified in a message that attacks their professional reputation, individuals involved may be liable for legal action
- The Defamation Act 2013 applies to content shared on social media platforms, including WhatsApp
- Parents/carers are strongly advised to avoid engaging in or contributing to negative discussions about the school, staff, pupils or families

- Any WhatsApp groups or posts containing inappropriate or negative content should be deleted or disbanded to prevent escalation and potential legal consequences

The school expects that the same standards outlined in this policy are followed. In particular, parents/carers should:

- Communicate respectfully at all times
- Avoid posting complaints about the school, staff, pupils or other parents
- Not share confidential or sensitive information
- Not discuss specific incidents involving pupils
- Not share images of children other than their own without consent

Concerns or complaints must be raised through the school's official communication channels so they can be addressed appropriately.

The school reserves the right to take action where the behaviour of individuals on social media (including private groups) has an impact on the safety, wellbeing or reputation of the school community.

7. Professional Communication and Media Contact

- Only authorised staff may speak on behalf of the school
- Media or social media enquiries must be referred to the Headteacher
- Staff must not respond publicly without approval

8. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Intellectual Property

- Staff should not do anything to jeopardise School confidential information and intellectual property through the use of social media.
- In addition, Staff should avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other School's, organisations, companies and individuals, which can create liability for the School as well as the individual author.
- Staff must not use the School's logos, brand names, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without express prior written permission from the Headteacher.
- To protect yourself and the School against liability for copyright infringement, the Staff member should, where appropriate, reference sources of particular information you post or upload and cite them accurately. If you have any questions about whether a particular post or upload might violate anyone's copyright or trademark, ask the Headteacher in the first instance before making the communication.

9. Recruitment

The school may conduct online searches on shortlisted candidates in line with:

- Data protection laws
- Equal opportunities obligations

10. Monitoring

The school reserves the right to:

- Monitor, intercept and review use of IT systems and social media
- Investigate suspected breaches
- Access communications where necessary

Staff should have no expectation of privacy when using school systems.

11. Responsibilities

- **Governing Board:** Oversight and approval
- **Headteacher:** Implementation and enforcement
- **Senior Leaders:** Promote compliance
- **All Staff:** Adhere to policy and report concerns

12. Training and Awareness

- Staff training will be provided (including staff induction)
- Guidance may be shared with pupils and parents

13. Breaches of Policy

Breaches may result in:

- Disciplinary action (up to dismissal)
- Removal of content
- Legal action where applicable

14. Monitoring and Review

- Reviewed annually (or as required)
- Updated to reflect legal and safeguarding changes

15. Related Policies

- Safeguarding / Child Protection
- Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- ICT Acceptable Use
- Data Protection

