



CHEW STOKE CHURCH SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media sites play an important role in the lives of many people, including children. We recognise that social networking can bring many benefits, but there are also potential risks. The aim of this document is to give clarity to the way in which social media sites are to be used by the Chew Stoke Church School community: pupils, staff, parents, carers, governors and other volunteers. All members of the school community should bear in mind that information they share through social media and networks, even if it is on private spaces, is still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and UK libel and defamation laws.

A. The use of social media sites by pupils whilst at school

Pupils should not access social networking sites whilst at school without first obtaining permission from a member of staff. Pupils and parents will be reminded that the use of some social media sites is inappropriate for Primary-aged pupils.

B. Comments posted by parents/carers on social media sites

Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social media via this policy (in particular when their child joins the school), the school website, letter and school newsletters.

- Parents/carers are asked not to post images (photos and videos or comments) of pupils other than their own children on social media sites unless they have the permission of parents of other children pictured
- Parents/carers are asked to raise queries, concerns or complaints directly with the school rather than posting them on social media
- Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about the school or any member of the school community
 - If malicious, fictitious or threatening comments are made the school will request that they are removed
 - If the person responsible has not been identified, or will not take the material down, the school will contact the host (i.e. the social networking site) to request the content is removed
 - In cases of actual/suspected illegal content, the school will contact the police
 - Where appropriate, legal action will be taken by the school

C. Use of social media sites by employees in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of employees will have their own social networking accounts. It is important that they protect their professional reputation, and that of the school, by ensuring that they use their personal sites in an appropriate manner. All employees (whether paid or voluntary, short term or permanent) will be advised as follows:

- That they familiarise themselves with social network sites' privacy settings in order to ensure that information is not automatically shared with a wider audience than intended. It is recommended that, as a minimum, all privacy settings are set to 'friends only', irrespective of use/purpose
- That they do not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:
 - Bring the school into disrepute
 - Lead to valid parental complaints
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees
 - Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or governors
 - Bring into question their appropriateness to work with children
 - Contravene current National Teacher Standards
- That they use caution when forming online friendships or enter into social media communication with parents/carers as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised
- Online friendships and online communication with pupils is prohibited as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised, and/or safeguarding allegations being raised, extreme caution should be used if befriending any young person under the age of 18
- If a current pupil sends a friend request the school is notified and the parents of the pupil informed
- That they should not post pictures of (without the Headteacher's consent) or negative comments about school events
- That if their use of social media/networking sites contravenes this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary action

Inappropriate use by employees should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance.

D. Creation of social media accounts by school staff for use in education

All social media services must be approved by the Headteacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

E. Use of social media sites by governors

Governors are advised to use caution when forming online friendships or enter into communication with staff as this could lead to professional relationships being compromised. Reasons for this include:

- Potential for a conflict of interest where a governor is on a selection panel/disciplinary panel where a 'friend' is involved
- Due to the role of the governing body and its general responsibility for the conduct of the school, it is sensible to maintain a certain level of separation between governors and staff

Governors must not conduct or portray themselves, or allow friends to portray them, in a manner which may:

- Bring the school into disrepute
- Lead to valid parental complaints
- Be deemed as derogatory towards the school and/or its employees
- Be deemed as derogatory towards pupils, parents/carers or other governors

Appropriate procedures would be followed if it is deemed that a governor has behaved in an inappropriate manner online.

F. 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/governors

Dated reviewed – November 2017

Review Date – January 2021