

Clarendon Federation



Social Media Policy 2026-2027

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Introduction

Social media is an important part of modern life and can provide valuable opportunities for communication, collaboration, learning and sharing information. Clarendon Federation recognises that social media can be used positively to celebrate the achievements of our children, communicate with families and promote the work of our schools.

However, social media also presents risks, particularly in relation to safeguarding, privacy, confidentiality, online bullying, reputational damage and inappropriate communication.

This policy sets out the expectations of Clarendon Federation regarding the responsible and respectful use of social media by staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors, volunteers and visitors.

The policy should be read alongside the Federation's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Parent Code of Conduct
 - Acceptable Use Policy
 - Online Safety Policy
 - Data Protection and Privacy policies
 - Complaints Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
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Our Clarendon Promise

The expectations within this policy reflect our **Clarendon Promise**:

Be Kind

We communicate with kindness and consideration.

Never Give Up

We use appropriate channels to resolve concerns rather than allowing disagreements to escalate online.

Be Curious

We think carefully about information we see and share online.

Be Respectful

We respect other people's privacy, views, dignity and right to confidentiality.

Be a Team Player

We work positively with children, families, staff and the wider school community.

Be Brilliant

We use technology responsibly and positively to celebrate learning and contribute to our school community.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote safe, responsible and respectful use of social media;
- protect children, families and staff from inappropriate online behaviour;
- safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of members of the school community;
- clarify expectations regarding personal and professional social media use;
- provide guidance for the Federation's official social media accounts;
- prevent social media being used to intimidate, threaten, bully or harass others;
- ensure concerns are raised through appropriate school channels;
- protect the reputation of Clarendon Federation and its schools;
- support positive relationships between home and school.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Clarendon Federation employees;
- supply staff, agency workers and contractors;
- governors and volunteers;
- pupils;
- parents and carers;
- visitors and other members of the school community where their social media activity relates to the Federation or members of its community.

It applies to social media platforms including, but not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- X
- Snapchat
- YouTube
- WhatsApp
- Threads
- online forums and community groups
- blogs and websites
- messaging platforms
- any future social media or communication platforms.

General Expectations

Everyone connected with Clarendon Federation is expected to:

- communicate respectfully and appropriately online;
- consider the potential impact of their words before posting;
- protect the privacy of children, families and staff;
- avoid sharing confidential or sensitive information;
- avoid posting photographs or videos of other people's children without appropriate consent;
- avoid making comments that could identify or embarrass individual children, families or staff;
- raise concerns directly with the school rather than through social media;
- report safeguarding concerns through the appropriate channels;
- avoid using social media to make allegations about individual members of the school community;
- avoid engaging in online arguments or disputes involving the school;
- remember that online communication can be copied, shared and retained indefinitely.

The Federation encourages everyone to **pause before posting** and consider:

Is it kind?

Is it respectful?

Is it necessary?

Would I be comfortable saying this face-to-face?

Could this affect a child, family or member of staff?

Could this post be misunderstood or shared more widely than intended?

Official Clarendon Federation Social Media

Clarendon Federation may use official social media accounts to:

- celebrate children's achievements;
- share information about school events;
- communicate reminders and key messages;
- celebrate learning and wider school life;
- promote community events and activities;
- share information from trusted organisations;
- celebrate staff and school achievements;
- promote positive relationships with families and the wider community.

Only authorised members of staff may post on official Federation social media accounts.

Content posted on official accounts should:

- reflect the values of Clarendon Federation;
- be accurate and appropriate;
- protect children's privacy;
- comply with parental consent arrangements;
- avoid identifying children unnecessarily;
- be checked for spelling, accuracy and appropriateness;
- avoid confidential information;

- maintain professional standards.

The Federation reserves the right to remove comments or content from its official social media accounts where it is inappropriate, offensive, abusive, defamatory, discriminatory, confidential or otherwise contrary to this policy.

Where appropriate, individuals may be directed to the school's formal complaints procedure rather than engaging in discussion through social media.

Photographs and Videos

Photographs and videos of children may only be used by the Federation in accordance with the school's agreed consent arrangements and data protection requirements.

Staff must not:

- use personal social media accounts to share photographs or videos of pupils;
- share images of pupils through personal messaging or social media groups unless specifically authorised for an appropriate professional purpose;
- photograph pupils using personal devices unless this is expressly authorised by the school;
- share images that could embarrass, identify or compromise the safety of a child;
- tag pupils or their families in school-related social media posts.

Parents and carers are asked to respect the privacy of other children when taking photographs or videos at school events.

Parents/carers should not post photographs or videos of other people's children on social media without appropriate permission.

Staff Use of Social Media

Staff are entitled to use social media in their personal lives. However, staff should be aware that online activity can affect professional relationships and the reputation of the Federation.

Staff must:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- comply with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- maintain confidentiality;
- protect information relating to pupils, families and colleagues;
- ensure personal social media activity does not bring the Federation into disrepute;
- consider carefully whether colleagues, pupils or parents should be added as personal contacts;
- use professional communication channels when communicating with parents/carers about school matters.

Staff should not:

- discuss individual pupils, families or colleagues on personal social media;
- post confidential information about the Federation;
- post photographs or videos of pupils on personal accounts;
- use social media to communicate directly with pupils through personal accounts;
- engage in arguments or disputes with parents/carers online;
- make comments that could reasonably be interpreted as representing the views of the Federation unless authorised to do so;
- accept or initiate inappropriate online relationships with pupils.

Staff should report any concerning online contact involving pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or appropriate member of the leadership team.

Communication Between Staff and Parents/Carers

The Federation recognises that parents and staff may use social media and messaging platforms for personal purposes.

However, school-related communication should take place through **approved Federation communication systems and channels**.

Staff should not use personal social media accounts to:

- discuss a child's progress;
- discuss behaviour incidents;
- discuss attendance;
- discuss safeguarding matters;
- discuss complaints;
- share confidential school information;
- arrange informal meetings about individual children.

Parents/carers should use the school's agreed communication channels when contacting staff about school matters.

Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Clarendon Federation values positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents and carers are expected to communicate with the school in a way that reflects the **Clarendon Promise**.

Parents/carers should:

- raise concerns directly with the school;
- use appropriate communication channels;

- communicate respectfully with staff;
- allow the school reasonable opportunity to investigate concerns;
- protect the privacy of other children and families;
- avoid discussing individual children or staff on social media;
- avoid posting allegations or accusations about members of the school community;
- avoid sharing confidential school communications without permission;
- encourage children to use social media safely and responsibly.

Parents/carers must not use social media to:

- threaten, intimidate or abuse staff, pupils or other families;
- make defamatory or malicious comments about the Federation or members of its community;
- publish confidential information;
- identify or discuss individual children in a way that could cause harm or embarrassment;
- organise or encourage online harassment;
- make allegations about safeguarding matters involving individual children;
- encourage children to confront or challenge other children through social media.

Concerns about another child's behaviour should be reported to the school rather than addressed directly through social media.

School-Related WhatsApp and Online Groups

The Federation recognises that parents and carers may establish informal WhatsApp or other online groups.

These groups are independent of Clarendon Federation unless explicitly established and managed by the school.

Parents/carers are asked to:

- use groups responsibly;
- avoid discussing individual children;
- avoid sharing personal information about families or staff;
- avoid posting allegations or accusations;
- avoid using groups to organise confrontation or retaliation;
- remember that messages may be forwarded or shared outside the original group;
- report safeguarding concerns directly to the school or appropriate authorities rather than relying on an online group.

Staff should not participate in informal parent/carer social media groups where doing so could compromise professional boundaries.

Pupil Use of Social Media

The Federation recognises that many children will access online platforms outside school.

Children are expected to:

- follow the school's online safety expectations;
- treat others with kindness and respect;
- not use social media to bully, threaten or exclude others;
- not share photographs or videos of others without permission;
- not share personal information;
- tell a trusted adult if something online makes them feel worried, uncomfortable or unsafe;
- report inappropriate content;
- think carefully before posting or sharing content.

Where social media activity outside school has a significant impact on the wellbeing, safety or education of pupils or staff, the Federation may need to respond in accordance with its behaviour, safeguarding and other relevant policies.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying includes, but is not limited to:

- sending threatening or abusive messages;
- repeatedly contacting someone against their wishes;
- spreading rumours online;
- deliberately excluding someone from online groups;
- sharing embarrassing photographs or videos;
- creating fake accounts;
- impersonating another person;
- encouraging others to target an individual;
- posting abusive or discriminatory comments.

Cyberbullying involving pupils will be dealt with in accordance with the Federation's Behaviour and Online Safety Policies.

Cyberbullying or harassment involving staff, parents/carers or other members of the school community may be addressed through the appropriate school procedures.

Safeguarding

Social media can present safeguarding risks.

Anyone who becomes aware of online activity that may place a child at risk should report the concern immediately through the appropriate safeguarding procedures.

Staff should report safeguarding concerns to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or Deputy DSL.

Where appropriate, concerns may also need to be reported to external agencies.

The school will not investigate serious safeguarding concerns through social media discussions.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Everyone has a responsibility to protect personal and confidential information.

Information about pupils, families and staff must not be shared on social media unless the Federation has explicitly authorised the publication and all relevant requirements have been met.

This includes:

- names and personal details;
- addresses and contact information;
- medical information;
- safeguarding information;
- SEND information;
- photographs or videos;
- assessment information;
- behaviour information;
- information about family circumstances;
- confidential school communications.

Screenshots of school emails, messages or documents should not be shared publicly without permission.

Complaints and Concerns

Social media is not an appropriate forum for making formal complaints about the Federation.

Parents/carers and other members of the community should use the Federation's Complaints Policy and established communication channels.

The school will listen to concerns and will seek to resolve issues constructively.

Where a concern is raised publicly on social media, the school may respond by directing the individual to the appropriate formal process rather than discussing the matter publicly.

The Federation will not discuss confidential matters about individual children, families or staff on social media.

Offensive, Abusive or Defamatory Content

The Federation recognises that people may become frustrated or upset. However, this does not justify abusive or threatening communication.

The Federation may take appropriate action where social media is used to:

- threaten or intimidate;
- harass or bully;
- discriminate against another person;
- make malicious or defamatory statements;
- share confidential information;
- encourage others to target a member of the school community;
- bring the school community into significant disrepute.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- requesting removal of content;
 - restricting communication to formal channels;
 - applying the Parent Code of Conduct;
 - following staff disciplinary procedures;
 - following the school's behaviour procedures;
 - contacting relevant external agencies where appropriate.
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Freedom of Expression

Clarendon Federation recognises that individuals have the right to hold and express their own views.

This policy does not prevent people from expressing legitimate opinions or raising genuine concerns.

However, freedom of expression does not extend to threatening, abusive, discriminatory, defamatory or unlawful behaviour.

The Federation expects disagreements to be handled respectfully and through appropriate channels.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for:

- following this policy;
- following the Staff Code of Conduct;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- protecting confidential information;
- following safeguarding procedures;
- using official communication channels appropriately;
- reporting concerns about inappropriate online behaviour.

Failure to follow this policy may result in action under the Federation's relevant employment or disciplinary procedures.

Leadership Responsibilities

The Federation's leadership team will:

- ensure staff understand their responsibilities;
 - provide appropriate online safety guidance;
 - monitor official Federation social media accounts;
 - respond appropriately to concerns;
 - ensure safeguarding concerns are dealt with through appropriate procedures;
 - ensure the policy is reviewed regularly;
 - take proportionate action where the policy is breached.
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Governors

Governors are expected to:

- maintain confidentiality;
- follow the Federation's Code of Conduct;
- use social media responsibly;
- avoid discussing confidential Federation matters online;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- direct concerns through the appropriate governance or school procedures.

Governors should not use personal social media accounts to respond publicly to complaints about the Federation.

Reporting Inappropriate Content

If a member of the school community becomes aware of inappropriate social media content relating to the Federation, they should:

1. Avoid engaging in an online argument.
2. Save evidence where appropriate, such as screenshots.

3. Report the concern to the appropriate member of staff.
 4. Follow safeguarding procedures immediately if a child may be at risk.
 5. Avoid sharing the content further unless this is necessary for reporting or safeguarding purposes.
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Policy Breaches

Any alleged breach of this policy will be considered on its individual circumstances.

The Federation will consider:

- the nature of the content;
- who was affected;
- whether children or vulnerable individuals were involved;
- whether confidential information was shared;
- whether the behaviour was repeated;
- the potential impact on individuals or the Federation;
- whether safeguarding concerns are present.

Action will be proportionate and consistent with relevant Federation policies and procedures.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect:

- changes in social media platforms;
- changes in legislation and guidance;
- emerging online safety risks;
- learning from incidents;
- feedback from staff, pupils, parents and governors.

Next review date: October 2027

Appendix 1 – Social Media: Think Before You Post

Before posting, sharing or commenting, ask:

BE KIND

Would my words make someone feel respected and valued?

BE RESPECTFUL

Am I respecting someone's privacy?

BE CURIOUS

Do I know that what I am sharing is accurate?

BE A TEAM PLAYER

Could I resolve this directly and constructively instead?

NEVER GIVE UP

Have I used the appropriate school process to raise my concern?

BE BRILLIANT

Does this contribute positively to our school community?

If in doubt, don't post.

Appendix 2 – Quick Guide for Parents and Carers

Please:

- ✓ Contact school directly if you have a concern.
- ✓ Use the school's agreed communication channels.
- ✓ Be respectful when communicating with staff.
- ✓ Protect children's privacy.
- ✓ Think carefully before posting.
- ✓ Check information before sharing it.
- ✓ Report safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Please don't:

- X Post complaints or allegations about individual staff or children.
- X Share photographs of other children without permission.
- X Share confidential school information.
- X Use social media to threaten, abuse or intimidate others.
- X Encourage children to resolve disputes through social media.
- X Use WhatsApp or social media groups to discuss individual children.
- X Share or encourage rumours.

Our children learn from the adults around them. Let's model the Clarendon Promise online as well as in school.

Appendix 3 – Useful Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Leads: Mrs Emma Brown, Mrs Wendy Riordan, Mrs Roushka Westall, Mrs Lorraine Cannon

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Miss Caroline Hayday, Miss Lauren Day, Mrs Katrina Kay, Mrs Vicky Allen

Executive Head: Mrs Pamela Evans

School Office: Mrs Gemma Shaw (Infants), Mrs Karen Cross (Juniors)

School complaints procedure: Available from the school office / Federation website.