

Shavington Primary School



Social Media Policy

Reviewed: December 2024

To be reviewed: December 2025

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Introduction

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, Local Governors Board (LGB), visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Shavington Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are four key areas:

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

The school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate. Social Media sites to be used in school include our school's website, run and operated by School spider and our digital leaders group may access Twitter as part of their training whilst working in a small group supported by a member of staff.

Any blogging done through our School website is monitored by our ICT lead and any posts that use 'inappropriate' language are flagged to her. She then will remove anything "inappropriate" and speak to the child and or parent concerned.

Any posts that include the school spider's list of inappropriate words, have to be reviewed by the ICT lead and then a decision about whether to allow them to be posted or to removed will then be made.

Children also know that they can report any inappropriate comments, photos or posts and that will then be flagged to the ICT lead who will investigate further.

In terms of private use of social networking sites by a child it is generally understood that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered, including Facebook and Instagram to name two.

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must **never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Local Governors Board (LGB) or Trustees of the MAT.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'. ^[L]_[SEP]
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

C. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include our website, the weekly newsletter, emails, Showbie, phone calls, and verbal discussions. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion.

Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child. (Please see our schools communication protocol for all school stakeholders policy).

Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.

Throughout their time at our school all children will participate in plays and performances. They may also have their photographs or video clips taken as a way to document learning and experiences. We may sell DVDs or photographs to parents on the understanding that these are for personal use only and should not be shared on social media sites. These images will only be used by the school with consent of the parents on the school's website and publications. Our children's photographs will not be shared with 3rd parties unless consent from a parent has been gained.

Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites. Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Headteacher will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

The LGB and Trustees of the MAT understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society or
- disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession."

(National Association of Head teachers)
