Our Christian faith emphasises the value and worth of every individual
with their own distinctive character, gifts and abilities.

Christ's command to 'Love one another' calls us to respect and help other people,
this provides the foundation for our school and all we aim to achieve.

Social Media Policy

Objectives

Social media (e.g. Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games, for example Minecraft or Fortnite and video sharing platforms such as YouTube have social media elements to them.

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. New technologies are an integral part of our lives and are powerful tools which open up teaching and learning opportunities for the school's staff in many ways. Staff, Governors, parents/carers and pupils are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school, its staff, parents, carers and children. It also compliant with 2018 GDPR legislation and practice.

This policy is intended to help members of the school's community to make appropriate decisions about the use of all forms of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as X (Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn and any other social media websites.

This document therefore sets out Holy Trinity's policy on social networking and aims to:

- Assist the school's staff working with children to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use;
- Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken;
- Support safer working practice;
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils;
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.
- Ensures that use is fully compliant with 2018 GDPR legislation.

This policy supplements our 'Email and Internet Use' Policy and should not be used to address issues where other policies and procedures exist to deal with them. For example, any alleged misconduct which falls within the scope of the Management of Allegations Policy requires the school to comply with additional child protection requirements as set out in that policy.

Scope

This policy:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school. This includes all members of the school's community (including employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers, pupils, parents/carers, visitors and agency workers) who have access to and are users of the school's equipment. It does not form part of employee's contract of employment;
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere;
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education;
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school's name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities

SLT
- Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
- Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
- Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
- Approval of Social Media account creation
- Create the account following SLT approval.
- *N.B.* All Social Media accounts must be approved by the Head Teacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

Administrator / Moderator
- Store account details, including passwords securely
- Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
- Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring).

Staff
- Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attending appropriate training
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts if/when naming the school.

Process for creating new accounts

The school's community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a school X (Twitter) account, or a Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the Head Teacher which covers the following points:-
- The aim of the account;
- The intended audience;
- How the account will be promoted;
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named);
- Will the account be open or private/closed.

Following consideration by the Head Teacher and SLT, an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

The school's social media accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (including during holidays). Parents/carers and pupils are not to use these accounts as a form of communication with the school and any queries or complaints must be directed via the school office in the standard way.

Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour
- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must make clear who they are in social media posts or accounts (e.g. include class name on X (Twitter) posts). Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a media enquiry is received about posts made using social media staff must inform SLT and not respond directly.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to the Head Teacher and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws, or breach confidentiality.
- Users will be fully compliant with GDPR 2018 regulations and will operate within the school's policies within these platforms.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. Please refer these to the Head Teacher.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported to the Head Teacher using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:
- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. X (Twitter)

Use of images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.
- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's GDPR and data processing, digital and video images polies. Prior to posting photos of pupils, staff should check the parental consented in the class register. If anyone asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts - personal phones are not to be used unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is authorised by the Head Teacher.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use

Staff
- Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.
- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
- Staff or Governors should ensure they do not disclose any personal information about members of the school community or disclose any information that is confidential to the school, including any information obtained as a result of their employment or position and not yet in the public domain.
- Staff or Governors should not post anything or act in such a way as to bring damage to the school or its reputation.
- Staff or Governors must not knowingly "follow", "friend" or engage in any way on Social Media with any minor who is, or was a pupil at the school unless that pupil is a member of their family, a relation or under their guardianship or are following the individual solely as a consequence of fulfilling their parental or guardian responsibilities.

- Staff or Governors should avoid making any social media communications that could damage the school's interests or reputation, even indirectly ;
- Staff and Governors must not use social media to defame or disparage the school, our staff, pupils or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff, pupils or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate staff, pupils or third parties;
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
- The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.

Pupil/Students
- The school's curriculum should enable the pupils to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- Pupils are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy.
- Pupils must not access/ use social network sites within the school unless supervised during Curriculum time by a class teacher, e.g. Minecraft.
- Pupils should not knowingly "follow", "friend" or engage in any way on Social Media with any teacher or ex-teacher who worked at the school unless they are a member of their family, a relation or guardian.
- Pupils must not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Parents/Carers
- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion.
- Parents/carers are not expected to post pictures of pupils or video images other than their own children on social networking sites.
- Parents/carers should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
- The school has an active Internet Safety programme which supports the safe and positive use of the Internet. This includes information on the website.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.
- Parents/carers should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Monitoring posts about the school

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.
- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School asks and encourages Governors, employees, pupils and parents to report any damaging or negative comment about the school or a member of the school community on social media to a member of the Senior Leadership team. Reports of any praise or positive comment are also welcome.

Dealing with incidents of online bullying

Holy Trinity C of E Primary School staff and pupils need to work together to prevent online bullying through the use of Social Media and to tackle it whenever it occurs.

All pupils are encouraged to report incidences of online bullying; whether experienced personally or if they are aware that another pupil is experiencing online bullying.

The school has a duty to ensure that:

- teachers have sufficient knowledge to deal with online bullying in the school
- the curriculum teaches pupils about the risks of new communications technologies, the consequences of their misuse, and how to use them safely
- all e-communications used on the school site or as part of school activities off-site are monitored
- Internet blocking technologies are continually updated and harmful sites blocked
- It works with pupils and parents/carers to make sure new communications technologies are used safely, taking account of local and national guidance and good practice
- security systems are in place to prevent images and information about pupils and staff being accessed improperly from outside the school.

The staff have a responsibility to:

- teach children safe Internet etiquette
- Ensure children are safe from Terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school, including establishing appropriate levels of filtering (Prevent Duty 2015).
- apply the school's policy in monitoring electronic messages and images
- give pupils key guidance on:
    - personal privacy rights
    - material posted on any electronic platform
    - photographic images
      take action if a pupil is being online bullied or is bullying someone else
    - teach pupils the value of e-communications and the risks and consequences of improper use, including the legal implications.

Safeguarding of Children

Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy

Pupils may have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records. Visitors, volunteers and students are **not** permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of the school's children for their own records during the school day. School staff may take or record images of the school's children in capturing evidence of learning and achievements. However, these images or videos must be deleted from personal devices immediately after they have served their intended purpose and must not be shared on social media beyond secure, restricted school social media groups.

Procedures

1. Under the GDPR Act 2018, the school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders.
2. Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and learning and displayed in the school and in albums or a pupil's development records for children and parent carers, governors, OFSTED, LA officers, to look through.
3. Often photographs may contain other pupils in the background.

4. Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending. They are explicitly informed that it is of their own children and not to be published on any social media platform.
5. Parents/careers must not post photographs or video containing other pupils taken at the school's events on social media websites.
6. On occasion, the school might like to use photographs of pupils taking part in an activity to advertise/promote the school via the website. In this instance, specific parental permission will be required, and is sought in the September Data Collection permissions forms.
7. Visitors may only use their phones outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.
8. The use of cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in toilet areas.
9. All school cameras and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.

Prevent Duty

From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 ("the CTSA 2015"), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The school has undertaken a risk assessment of our pupils being drawn into terrorism. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people within our local area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. RBWM is considered a low risk LA. All staff and Governors have received Training in the Prevent Duty.

Schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. The school follows the advice from The Department for Education advice for schools on the Prevent duty, June 2015
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf

Related Policies
Email, Internet and E-Safety Policy
Data Protection Policy
Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
Privacy Notice for Parents

The Governing Body approved this policy on date: 1st February 2024

Signed: Chair of Governors

Signed: Head Teacher

Managing your personal use of Social Media:
- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's
- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Have a full and clear understanding of the schools GDPR policy and implement it accordingly.
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Do nots
- Do not make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Do not publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Do not breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and do not link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Do not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Do not use social media to air internal grievances
- Do not use social media to contact or communicate with current or ex-pupils

Appendix 2 – Communication to parents/carers

Dear Parents/Carers,

Social media is here to stay. The continuing popularity of platforms like Facebook and X (Twitter) have prompted staff and governors to reflect on how we can all set a good example to the children in our school when using these, and other, social media tools.

We would like to invite all parents and carers from the Holy Trinity C of E Primary School community to do the same.

I have attached an etiquette document to this letter that tells you what staff and governors have agreed and what our promises to the children, parents and carers are when using social networking sites. We hope that you will take up our invitation.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Anna Smith
Head Teacher

Appendix 3
Governors, Staff and Parents of Holy Trinity C of E Primary School
Best Practice on Social Networking Sites

The leadership, staff and governors have agreed an approach to the use of social networking sites that include the principles below. We are now inviting parents to join us in setting a good example for our children.

All parents are asked to join staff in setting a good example for our children by:
- Demonstrating courtesy and respect for staff, other parents and pupils when comments are placed on social networking sites.
- Using appropriate language when discussing school.
- Addressing any issues or concerns regarding school directly with the Head of School, a member of staff or governors.

All parents are asked to join staff in setting a good example for our children by **not**:
- Using social network sites to make derogatory comments or posting photographs which could bring staff into disrepute, including such comments about pupils, parents, other staff members, the senior leadership team, governors, local authority, school policy or the wider community.
- Posting photographs of other people's children on social network sites without their permission.

Our promise to the school community is:
- We will meet with you and use the Governing Body's policies and procedures to resolve concerns.
- We will work hard to resolve any concerns in the best interest of the whole community.
- We will act in the best interest of the whole community and honour our duty of care to our children.
- We will never conduct school business through social networking sites.

The school reserves the right to remove comments in violation of these principles or – in certain circumstances – to block users from our social media feeds.