

St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy

Love, Learn and Live in Christ



Social Media Policy May 2026

Review Date	Changes Made	Amended By
May 2026	Policy created	L. Paquim

Rationale

St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy recognises that members of the school community use the internet for personal reasons and that they may participate in social media in its many forms. We recognise that social media and online communication are now an integral part of daily life. Social media can provide valuable opportunities to celebrate achievement, strengthen communication with families, promote the work of the school and engage positively with the wider community.

This policy sets out expectations for the safe, professional and responsible use of social media by:

- the school and its representatives, including employees, Academy Councillors and volunteers
- staff in their personal use of social media where this may affect the school, its pupils, families, staff or the reputation of the school.

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Acceptable Use Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Communication Policy;
- Parent Code of Conduct;
- Online Safety Policy;
- BPSCAT Zero Tolerance Policy

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- safeguard pupils, staff and the wider school community;
- protect the Catholic ethos and reputation of the school;
- promote safe, respectful and professional online conduct;
- provide clear guidance regarding acceptable use of social media;
- minimise safeguarding, confidentiality and reputational risks; and
- ensure compliance with legal and professional obligations.

Definitions of Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media includes any website, app or platform which allows users to create, share or comment on content. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- X
- TikTok

- WhatsApp
- Snapchat
- blogs, forums and discussion sites;
- video-sharing platforms; and
- messaging or community applications.

General social media expectations

St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy believes everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity. The same standards of behaviour are expected online as would be expected offline and all members of the St Joseph's community are expected to engage in social media in a positive and responsible manner.

School use of social media

The school has a Facebook and Instagram account which all members of the school community are encouraged to follow in order to see updates relating to the day-to-day life of the school. This is managed by the Headteacher and the school has guidelines for what may and must not be posted (Appendix 1). Those who are authorised to manage, or post to, the account, must ensure that they abide by these guidelines at all times.

Official school social media accounts may be used to:

- celebrate pupils' achievements and learning;
- share school news, reminders and events;
- promote the Catholic life and values of the school;
- communicate emergency information where appropriate;
- engage positively with parents and the community; and
- support recruitment and promotion of the school.

Only authorised staff members approved by the Headteacher may create content for official school accounts or publish posts on behalf of the school. All published posts will be approved by either the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher prior to them being made public. Access should be removed promptly when staff leave or no longer require access to the account. The school has a dedicated mobile phone for its social media use and this is kept with the Headteacher.

Official social media accounts are suitably protected and are linked via our school website.

Content Standards:

All content published through school accounts must:

- reflect the Catholic ethos and values of the school;
- be respectful, professional and inclusive;
- protect the dignity and wellbeing of pupils;
- be appropriate for a public audience;
- comply with safeguarding and GDPR requirements; and
- avoid political, discriminatory or inflammatory content.

The school will not use social media to:

- discuss confidential matters;
- respond publicly to complaints or disputes involving individual pupils, families or staff;
- criticise individuals or organisations; or
- engage in arguments or confrontational exchanges online

Photos and videos:

The school will only publish images or videos of pupils where appropriate parental consent has been obtained in accordance with the school's data protection procedures.

When publishing images and videos:

- children must be appropriately dressed;
- full names should not normally be used alongside images, unless for a specific reason and where parental consent to do so has been obtained;
- images should not reveal personal information; and
- content must preserve the dignity and safety of pupils.
- Photos and videos of educational visits will only be shared once the children have returned to school to avoid their location being made public.

Monitoring and Moderation

The school reserves the right to:

- monitor activity on official accounts;
- remove inappropriate comments;
- block abusive users; and
- report harmful or offensive content where necessary.

Comments containing:

- abusive language;
- discriminatory content;
- defamatory remarks;
- misinformation;
- personal attacks; or
- safeguarding concerns

will be removed without notice. Where parents and members of the public have concerns, these should be raised through the school's formal procedures rather than through social media platforms.

Staff use of social media

Staff are entitled to have their own personal social media accounts. As an employee of St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy, the code of conduct for staff addresses the need to behave in an appropriate manner and ensure that the school and the Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust are not brought into disrepute. Staff are responsible for checking and

maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts and are asked to consider the risks to school (reputational and financial) when using social media channels.

Staff are also asked to recognise the impact that posts on social media may have on public confidence in the school, professional relationships with colleagues and the reputation of the school and the wider Catholic community. Staff are expected to use social media responsibly, respectfully and professionally at all times.

Professional conduct

Staff must not:

- post content which could bring the school into disrepute;
- make derogatory comments about pupils, parents, colleagues, academy councillors, the parish or the wider community;
- share confidential or sensitive school information;
- post discriminatory, offensive or inappropriate material;
- engage in online bullying, harassment or intimidation;
- identify themselves as representing the school without authorisation; or
- publish content inconsistent with the professional standards expected of school staff.

Staff should remember that:

- privacy settings do not guarantee privacy;
- screenshots and reposts can make private content public; and
- online conduct may be subject to investigation where it impacts professional suitability.

Staff must not:

- accept current pupils as friends or followers on personal social media accounts;
- communicate with pupils through personal accounts or messaging services;
- initiate inappropriate online contact with parents; or
- use personal social media to discuss school matters.

Communication with parents and pupils should take place only through approved school channels and staff are advised not to communicate with or add any current or past family members as 'friends' on their personal social media accounts.

Staff use of social media during work hours should be limited to designated break times. Excessive or inappropriate use may be managed under disciplinary procedures.

Use of social media by pupils

The use of social media during school hours is not permitted for pupils. Many online behaviour incidents between children and young people occur on social media outside of the school day and off the school premises. Parents/carers are responsible for this behaviour; however, some online incidents may affect our culture and/or pose a risk to children and young people's health and well-being. Where online behaviour online poses a threat or causes harm to another pupil, could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school when the pupil

is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school, action will be taken in line with our behaviour and child protection/online safety policies.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy will empower our pupils to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful way, and develop their resilience so they can manage and respond to online risks. Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupils as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding education approach using age-appropriate sites and resources.

Any concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate existing policies, including anti-bullying, child protection and behaviour. The DSL (or deputy) will respond to social media concerns involving safeguarding or child protection risks in line with our child protection policy.

Sanctions and/or pastoral/welfare support will be implemented and offered to pupils as appropriate, in line with our child protection and behaviour policy. Civil or legal action may be taken if necessary. Concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media services and games.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local concerns and any changes to our technical infrastructure.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for using Instagram and Facebook

All posts on Instagram will be made by the Headteacher or a member of staff designated by the Headteacher. Personal mobile phones must not be used to take photos of children except in very exceptional circumstances when permission from the Headteacher has been sought and granted in advance. These images will be sent to the designated social media phone and then deleted from the staff member's phone immediately.

Photo permissions are sought from parents when their children first start school and this can be updated at any time via the Class Dojo. Posts made to school's social media accounts will only contain images of children whose parents have given permission for their child to appear on social media. When posting images of children, the Headteacher or designated member of staff making the post, will always have a second person checking the image to ensure that children without permission do not appear.

The content of posts on the school's social media accounts must be appropriate and not bring the local authority, school, or any member of the community into disrepute.

If a parent requests a post of their child be removed, this will be actioned immediately.