



Reedness Primary School

Social Media Policy



The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to communicate with various groups in new ways. Whilst recognising the benefits which using social media brings, this policy sets out the principles designed to ensure that all staff members use social media responsibly so that the confidentiality of students, staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded. Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate when using social media.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes. The policy applies to personal media platforms such as networking sites (e.g. Facebook), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access, online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia and content sharing sites such as Flickr and YouTube. However, this list is not exhaustive and new on-line platforms are to be considered automatically covered.

This policy also applies to online message boards/forums and comments under news items and other articles.

The internet is fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media, therefore the principles set out in this policy must be followed closely, irrespective of the medium or platform.

Our Social Media presence

Reedness Primary School works on the principle that if we don't manage our social media reputation, someone else will.

Online Reputation Management (ORM) is about understanding and managing our digital footprint (everything that can be seen or read about the school online). Few parents will apply for a school place without first Googling the school, and the Ofsted pre-inspection check includes monitoring what is being said online.

Accordingly, we manage and monitor our social media footprint carefully to know what is being said about the school and to respond to criticism and praise in a fair, responsible manner.

Matthew Herbert, Headteacher, is responsible for managing our social media presence.

Staff, pupils' and parents' SM presence

Social media (including all apps, sites and games that allow sharing and interaction between users) is a fact of modern life, and as a school, we accept that many parents, staff and pupils will use it. However, as stated in the acceptable use policies which all members of the school community sign, we expect everybody to behave in a positive manner, engaging respectfully with the school and each other on social media, in the same way as they would face to face.

This positive behaviour can be summarised as not making any posts which are or could be construed as bullying, aggressive, rude, insulting, illegal or otherwise inappropriate, or which might bring the school or (particularly for staff) the education profession into disrepute. This applies both to public pages and to private posts, e.g. parent chats, pages or groups.

The school uses images/video of children for external purposes, but it will only do so publicly if parents have given consent on the relevant form.

Parents

If parents have a concern about the school, we urge them to contact us directly and in private to resolve the matter. If an issue cannot be resolved in this way, the school complaints procedure should be followed. Sharing complaints on social media is unlikely to help resolve the matter, but can cause upset to staff, pupils and parents, also undermining staff morale and the reputation of the school (which is important for the pupils we serve).

Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13, we ask parents to respect age ratings on social media platforms wherever possible and not encourage or condone underage use.

Parents can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use with whom, for how long, and when (late at night / in bedrooms is not helpful for a good night's sleep and productive teaching and learning at school the next day).

Although the school has an official Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) account and will respond to general enquiries about the school, it asks parents/carers not to use these channels to communicate about their children. Email and via the school's dedicated ClassDojo page are the official electronic communication channels between parents and the school.

Pupils

Pupils are not allowed to be 'friends' with or make a friend request (Any attempt to do so may be a safeguarding concern or disciplinary matter and should be notified to the DSL or Headteacher) to any staff, governors, volunteers and contractors or otherwise communicate via social media.

Pupils are discouraged from 'following' staff, governor, volunteer or contractor public accounts (e.g. following a staff member with a public Instagram account) as laid out in the AUPs. However, we accept that this can be hard to control (this highlights the need for staff to remain professional in their private lives). In the reverse situation, however, staff must not follow such public student accounts.

Staff

Staff are reminded that they are obliged not to bring the school or profession into disrepute and the easiest way to avoid this is to have the strictest privacy settings and avoid inappropriate sharing and oversharing online. They should never discuss the school or its stakeholders on social media and be careful that their personal opinions might not be attributed to the school, trust or local authority, bringing the school into disrepute.

School community

All members of the school community are reminded that particularly in the context of social media, it is important to comply with the school policy on **Error! Reference source not found.** and permission is sought before uploading photographs, videos or any other information about other people. Parents must **not** covertly film or make recordings of any interactions with pupils or adults in schools or near the school gates, nor share images of other people's children on social media as there may be cultural or legal reasons why this would be inappropriate or even dangerous.

The school uses images/video of children for external purposes, but it will only do so publicly if parents have given consent on the relevant form.

Social media incidents

Social media incidents involving pupils are often safeguarding concerns and should be treated as such and staff should follow the safeguarding policy.

Breaches will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or code of conduct (for staff).

Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the school community, Reedness Primary School will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.

Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the school may report it to the platform where it is hosted, and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline, POSH (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for support or help to accelerate this process. The police or other authorities may be involved where a post is potentially illegal or dangerous.

Extremism

The school has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty. Staff will not support or promote extremist organisations, messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the school, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature. We ask for parents' support in this also, especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be widespread on certain platforms.

Review and Monitoring:

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body and Headteacher

Date: March 2025

Date to be reviewed: September, 2026

Approved by: Governing Body

Signed: M.Herbert