



THE COTSWOLD SCHOOL

The pursuit of academic excellence and individual achievement within a caring community



Policy:	Social Media Policy
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Authorised by:	Governing Body
Updated by:	Mrs K Allison Mrs F Peake Mrs L Rowley

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Linked In) 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 World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube also have social media elements to them.

Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students 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 section aims to encourage the safe use of social media by The Cotswold School, its staff, parents, carers and children.

This policy section is subject to the school's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements. It:

- Applies to all staff and to all online both professional and personal communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- 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

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students and parents and carers 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 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



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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.

Professional School Roles & Responsibilities

- **SLT**
 - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
 - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported social media incidents
 - Supporting school accounts used e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn
- **Administrator**
 - Create the account following SLT approval
 - 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 the school administrator
 - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school should read and understand this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

- School social media accounts – namely Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn will be monitored regularly and frequently
- Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts will be responded to within 24 hours

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.



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- 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 declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- 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 a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

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.

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. Facebook)

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 digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, 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



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- 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.

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.
- Where excessive personal use of social media in school is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken

- **Students**

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.
- Pupils/students 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

- **Parents/Carers**

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.

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 a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.

Ratified by Governors and
signed as such by The Chair of Governors

(08/07/2019)

This policy is written and administered with due regard to our duty and commitment as a school: to consider all aspects of equality and diversity.