



**St Mary's CE Primary School**  
Felsham Road  
Putney

# **Social Media Policy**

*At St. Mary's we provide an education of the highest quality to enable every child to realise their potential within a nurturing Christian community.*

## **Introduction**

This policy has been devised to provide guidelines for the use of social media at St. Mary's Church of England Primary School. The school recognises the increasing influence and impact of social media in today's world and this policy outlines the principles for both the school and its members to use services responsibly.

## **Rationale**

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make a distinction between school-sanctioned use and personal use of social media
- Ensure that the reputation of the school and its members of staff are protected
- Safeguard all children
- Protect the school from legal risks
- Provide guidelines for the use of the school's Twitter account

## **Scope**

This policy applies to St. Mary's Church of England Primary School's governing body, all teaching and other staff, pupils and their parents or carers, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, teacher trainees and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school. This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, MySpace), online blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, online gaming environments (for example Xbox Live), virtual worlds, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr, Last.fm and YouTube.

The internet is a 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 irrespective of the medium. All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in

line with other school policy and procedures including Safeguarding and Child Protection, e-Safety, Computing and Acceptable Use Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes and personal use of social media.

### **School Sanctioned Use of Social Media**

There are many legitimate uses of social media required by the school, namely to provide access to content and services that enhance the curriculum and support student learning, as well as communication with pupils, parents and the wider community. For example, the school has an official Twitter account (@PutneySMPS) and many aspects of the curriculum taught are enhanced through the regular use of content sharing services (e.g. Audio Network, Scratch, YouTube).

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff are to seek permission from the Head Teacher if they require the set up of a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff.
- All social media services and accounts created should be linked to an official school e-mail account (LGfL StaffMail).
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the SLT before access is permitted for pupils and staff.
- Social media accounts created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements.
- The content of any school- sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents/carers.
- Staff must not identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personal information to be published on school social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school- sanctioned social media should immediately be copied, removed and reported to either the Head Teacher or e-Safety coordinator.
- **Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of pupils and parents through social media where the message is not public.**

### **Personal Use of Social Media**

The school acknowledges its members of staff may use social media for personal reasons. There are many advantages to using social media in our daily lives, for example, services allow users to interact with one another, rediscover friends on social networking sites such as Facebook, keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter, sharing ideas via Pinterest and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia. However, staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

When using social media for personal purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Members of staff should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work for the school and their personal interests.
- Members of staff must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Mary's CE Primary School into disrepute.
- Members of staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community (unless they are family members) in any personal social media whilst in employment at St. Mary's CE Primary School.
- Members of staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media these must immediately be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Miss Cheryl Payne).
- Members of staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- School e-mail addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- All e-mail communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school e-mail account only (LGfL StaffMail).
- Members of staff should not use personal e-mail accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Head Teacher.
- Members of staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Members of staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.
- Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues and other parties and school corporate information must not be discussed on social media.
- St. Mary's CE Primary School logos or brands must not be used or published on personal social media without permission.
- Members of staff must not identify themselves as employees of St. Mary's CE Primary School or service providers for the school in their personal social media or webspace. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.
- The school does not permit the personal use of social media while at work on the school premises. This also includes off site activities such as a school trip or local visit.

## **School's Use of Twitter**

St. Mary's CE Primary School has set up its own Twitter account as a tool for communicating with parents and the wider community. Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service that allows people and organisations to send out short messages called tweets. Tweets are limited to 140 characters but can also contain media like photos or videos. When a Twitter account has been set up the default is for it to be public, so anyone can 'follow you' and your tweets are visible to any Twitter user. When someone 'follows you' they see your tweets in their timeline. The purpose of Twitter is to "create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers". As a school that is exploring new ways to communicate using technology we see the potential of Twitter in helping us to share information instantly with our parent audience. Nevertheless, the school also recognises the need for using the Twitter service in a responsible and safe way to help safeguard children and protect both the school and its members of staff (see Appendix A).

The school's official Twitter account is: @PutneySMPS

## **Guidelines for Twitter**

The following practices must be observed (Appendix A also outlines most of these):

- The school's Twitter account (@PutneySMPS) is directed towards our parent body and the wider community and the usual terms and conditions of Twitter will apply.
- Twitter states it is not designed to be a tool for children under 13 and therefore it is not appropriate for our pupils to be using it directly with a personal account.
- The school's Twitter account is a public account and all tweets posted will be available to read by members of the public.
- The school's Twitter account is to be used as a blog to record school activity, provide announcements and reminders and to tweet posts or links that reference established and known organisations that the school deems as appropriate and useful.
- To help protect the identity and privacy of pupils and members of staff we will never publish photographs or videos in which our children and staff can be identified by face on our school Twitter account.
- The school's Twitter account will never tweet or make reference to the full names of children in our school.
- The school's Twitter account will disable geographical location data so that tweets made off site such as on a school trip or school journey residential trip cannot be geographically traced.
- Tweets on the school's Twitter account will be posted by the SLT and any members of staff who wish to add a specific tweet must do so via a member of the SLT (this will ensure all tweets made by the school are appropriate and have been checked).
- 'Followers' of our school Twitter account will only be accepted once their associated e-mail has been verified as the e-mail they have provided on records held by the school office.
- The school's Twitter account will not follow the personal accounts of parents, carers, members of staff, children or anyone else.

- The school's Twitter account will only follow and accept followers of established and known organisations that have links with the school or a connection with education, children and family services (e.g. St. Mary's Church, Department of Education).
- The school's Twitter account will block or report any user that is disrespectful, offensive, inappropriate or misuses the service.
- The school's Twitter account is monitored by the school.

In addition to all of the above the following guidelines will be also be shared with our immediate users (once again Appendix A outlines these):

- You must be 13 years or over to use Twitter.
- Twitter terms and conditions apply.
- Do not post or publish any kind of personal information such as full names, age, contact numbers, where you live etc.
- Never tweet posts or publish something that may upset someone else.
- Never tweet spam or advertisements.
- Never tweet posts or publish something that would put the school into disrepute.
- Remember that not everyone is who they say they are.
- Report misuse (including bullying and harassment) immediately.
- Use of the Twitter service is at user's own risk.

### **Links with other School Policies and Practices**

St. Mary's Social Media Policy will operate in conjunction with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Computing Policy
- e-Safety Policy
- Taking and Use of Photographs
- AUP – Pupil and Staff Agreements

It would be good practice for all staff to familiarise themselves with both this document and the suggested linked documents.

### **Writing and reviewing the Social Media Policy 2016-17 arrangements**

Computing Subject Leader and e-Safety Coordinator  
Mark Lett

Our Social Media Policy has been written by Mr Mark Lett on behalf of the school and building on guidance taken from LGfL and [www.esafety-advisor.com](http://www.esafety-advisor.com). It has been agreed by all staff and approved by governors.

**The Social Media Policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually. Following this review the policy will be made available to all stakeholders via the school website.**

Date written: **September 2016**

Formally approved by Governors: **November 2016**

Date reviewed: **September 2017**

Suggested date of next review: **September 2018**

# St. Mary's Protocols and Guidelines for Twitter

## @PutneySMPS

For everyone in our school community to enjoy a safe and effective communication service from our Twitter account we have put together these protocols and guidelines.

**Remember** that our school Twitter account is a public account on a social networking service – all tweets and published information will be available to be read and searched by anybody.

### School's Use:

- Our school Twitter account is to be used as a blog to record school activity
- Our school Twitter account will provide announcements and reminders
- Our school Twitter account will tweet posts or links that reference established and known organisations that the school deems as appropriate and useful
- Our school Twitter account will never publish or tweet posts that contain photographs showing the faces of children and staff from our school
- Our school Twitter account will never tweet or make reference to the full names of children in our school
- Our school will never reveal geographical location data of posts made off site such as on a school trip or school journey residential trip
- Our school Twitter account will only accept parent and carer followers that have been approved through the verification of e-mails held by the school office
- Our school Twitter account will not follow the personal accounts of parents, carers, staff, children or anyone else
- Our school Twitter account will only follow and accept followers of established and known organisations that have links with the school or a connection with education, children and family services (e.g. St. Mary's Church, Department of Education)
- Our school Twitter account will block or report any user that is disrespectful, offensive, inappropriate or misuses the service
- Our school Twitter account is monitored by the school

### User's Use:

- You must be 13 years or over to use Twitter
- Do not post or publish any kind of personal information such as full names, age, contact numbers, where you live etc.
- Never tweet posts or publish something that may upset someone else
- Never tweet spam or advertisements
- Never tweet posts or publish something that would put the school into disrepute
- Remember that not everyone is who they say they are
- Report misuse (including bullying and harassment) immediately

**Disclaimer:** St. Mary's CE Primary School does not accept responsibility for the content viewed or linked to whilst using the Twitter service. Use of the Twitter service is at own risk. Twitter terms and conditions apply.