



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

Social Media Policy

Vision: *Delivering excellence, allowing all to flourish*

Mission: *Creating a culture of wonder, guided by Christian faith*

Values: *Compassion, Endurance, Thankfulness*

1. Introduction

1.1. 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.

2. Rationale

2.1. 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.

2.2. 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 social media accounts even if no active accounts are in use.

3. Scope

3.1. 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.

3.2. 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), online blogs, microblogs such as X, 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, Reddit and YouTube.

3.3. 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, GDPR and privacy notices, Online Safety, Computing and Acceptable Use Policies.

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

4. Social Media Use

4.1. 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.

4.2. 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) teaching profession into disrepute. This applies both to public pages and to private posts, e.g. chats, pages or groups.

4.3. 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).

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

4.5. However, the school has to strike a difficult balance of not encouraging underage use at the same time as needing to acknowledge reality in order to best help our pupils/students to avoid or cope with issues if they arise. Online safety lessons will look at social media and other online behaviour, how to be a good friend online and how to report bullying, misuse, intimidation or abuse. However, children will often learn most from the models of behaviour they see and experience, which will often be from adults.

4.6. Parents can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use (you don't need to know them – ask

your child to explain it to you), 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). Parents may wish to refer to the [Digital Family Agreement](#) to help establish shared expectations and the [Top Tips for Parents](#) poster along with relevant items and support available from parentonlinesafety.lgfl.net and parentsafe.lgfl.net and introduce the [Children's Commission Digital 5 A Day](#).

5. **School Sanctioned Use of Social Media**

- 5.1. 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 Facebook page (St. Mary's CE Primary School, Putney) and X 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).
- 5.2. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:
 - 5.2.1. Staff and other stakeholders 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 or stakeholder.
 - 5.2.2. All social media services and accounts created should be linked to an official school e-mail account (LGfL StaffMail).
 - 5.2.3. The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the SLT before access is permitted for pupils and staff.
 - 5.2.4. Social media accounts created must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements.
 - 5.2.5. The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
 - 5.2.6. Staff and other stakeholders must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents/carers.
 - 5.2.7. Staff and other stakeholders must not identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personal information to be published on school social media accounts.
 - 5.2.8. Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
 - 5.2.9. Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be copied, removed and reported to either the Head Teacher or Online Safety coordinator.
 - 5.2.10. **Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of pupils and parents through social media where the message is not public.**

6. **Personal Use of Social Media**

- 6.1. The school acknowledges its members of staff and other stakeholders 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 X, sharing ideas via Pinterest and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia. However, staff members and other stakeholders must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

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

6.2.1. Members of staff and other stakeholders should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work for the school and their personal interests.

6.2.2. Members of staff and other stakeholders must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St. Mary's CE Primary School into disrepute.

6.2.3. 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.

6.2.4. 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.*

6.2.5. If any member of staff or stakeholder 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– Headteacher) or deputy safeguarding lead in their absence.

6.2.6. Members of staff and other stakeholders are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

6.2.7. 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.

6.2.8. 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).

6.2.9. 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.

6.2.10. Members of staff and other stakeholders 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.

6.2.11. Members of staff and other stakeholders are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts.

6.2.12. Information staff members and other stakeholders have access to as part of their employment or link with the school, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues and other parties and school corporate information must not be discussed on social media.

- 6.2.13. St. Mary's CE Primary School logos or brands must not be used or published on personal social media without permission.
- 6.2.14. 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.
- 6.2.15. 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.
- 6.2.16. The serious consequences of inappropriate behaviour on social media are underlined by the fact that there has been a considerable number of Prohibition Orders issued by the Teacher Regulation Agency to teaching staff that involved misuse of social media/technology.
- 6.2.17. *Exceptions may be made, e.g. for pre-existing family links, but these must be approved by the Headteacher/Principal and should be declared upon entry of the pupil or staff member to the school).

7. School's Use of X and Facebook – when operational

- 7.1.1. St. Mary's CE Primary School has previously set up its own X and Facebook accounts as tools for communicating with parents, alumni and the wider community. X and Facebook are social networking services that allow people and organisations to connect with each other to share stories and media, promote events and publish messages and information that users will find useful and interesting. X messages were known as tweets and are limited to 280 characters but can also contain media like photos or videos. Facebook messages are known as posts, have a larger character limit (63,206 characters) and can also contain media like photos or videos. When a X or Facebook account has been set up the default is for it to be public, so anyone can 'follow you' and your posts are visible to any X or Facebook user. When someone 'follows you' they see your posts in their timeline or newsfeed. The purpose of X is to "create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers" and Facebook's mission is to "give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected". As a school that is exploring new ways to communicate using technology we see the potential of both X and Facebook in helping us to share information instantly with our parent audience. Nevertheless, the school also recognises the need for using the X and Facebook services in a responsible and safe way to help safeguard children and protect both the school and its members of staff (see Appendix A).
- 7.1.2. The school's official X account was previously listed as: @PutneySMPS. The school's official Facebook page was named: St. Mary's CE Primary School, Putney. NOTE: Both of these accounts were closed in 2025.

7.2. Guidelines for X and Facebook – when operational

- 7.2.1. The following practices must be observed (Appendix A also outlines most of these):
- 7.2.1.1. The school's X and Facebook accounts (@PutneySMPS) are directed towards our parent body, alumni and the wider community and the usual terms and conditions of X and Facebook will apply.
 - 7.2.1.2. X and Facebook both state they are not designed to be a tool for children under 13 and therefore it is not appropriate for our pupils to be using these services directly with a personal account.
 - 7.2.1.3. Children who would like to view any content published should do so indirectly, such as via our X feed on our school website or following URL links given in communications.
 - 7.2.1.4. The school's X and Facebook accounts are public accounts and all posts published will be available to read by members of the public.
 - 7.2.1.5. The school's X account is to be used as a blog to record school activity, provide announcements and reminders, share media and to tweet posts or links that reference established and known organisations that the school deems as appropriate and useful.
 - 7.2.1.6. The school's Facebook account is to be used in the same way as described above for X, but in addition will also be used as a platform for the setting up of related groups (e.g. St. Mary's Alumni, Bicentennial Planning Committee) and creating school sanctioned events.
 - 7.2.1.7. To help protect the identity and privacy of pupils and members of staff we will restrict the publishing of photographs or videos in which our children and staff can be identified by face on our school X and Facebook accounts. Exceptions to this will be the sharing of media for purposes deemed appropriate by the Head Teacher (e.g. Headteacher's Challenge) and usual permissions will be required for any staff or children featured.
 - 7.2.1.8. The school's X and Facebook accounts will never post or make reference to the full names of children in our school. The school's X and Facebook accounts will disable geographical location data so that posts made off site such as on a school trip or school journey residential trip cannot be geographically traced. Posts on the school's X and Facebook accounts will be published by the SLT and any members of staff who wish to add a specific post must do so via a member of the SLT (this will ensure all posts made by the school are appropriate and have been checked). The school's X account will not follow the personal accounts of parents, carers, members of staff, children or anyone else.
 - 7.2.1.9. The school's X and Facebook accounts 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).

- 7.2.1.10. The school's X and Facebook accounts will block or report any user that is disrespectful, offensive, inappropriate or misuses these services.
- 7.2.1.11. The school's X and Facebook accounts are monitored by the school.
- 7.2.1.12. 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):
- 7.2.1.13. You must be 13 years or over to use X or Facebook.
- 7.2.1.14. X and Facebook terms and conditions apply.
- 7.2.1.15. Do not post or publish material that contain photographs or videos showing the faces of children and staff from our school
- 7.2.1.16. Do not post or publish any kind of personal information such as full names, age, contact numbers, where you live etc.
- 7.2.1.17. Never post or publish something that may upset someone else.
- 7.2.1.18. Never post or publish spam or advertisements.
- 7.2.1.19. Never post or publish something that would put the school into disrepute.
- 7.2.1.20. Remember that not everyone is who they say they are.
- 7.2.1.21. Report misuse (including bullying and harassment) immediately.
- 7.2.1.22. Use of the X and Facebook services are at user's own risk.

8. Online Reputation Management

8.1. St. Mary's works on the principle that if we don't manage our social media presence, someone else will. The school follows the advice given by LGfL and the UK Safer Internet Centre on online reputation management – which is all 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 (Mumsnet is a particular favourite). Negative coverage almost always causes some level of disruption. Up to half of all cases dealt with by the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk) involve schools' (and staff members') online reputation. Accordingly, St. Mary's will 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.

9. Social media incidents

- 9.1. Social media incidents involving pupils are often safeguarding concerns and should be treated as such and staff should follow the safeguarding policy. Other policies that govern these types of incidents are the school's Acceptable Use Policies, and online safety policy.
- 9.2. Breaches will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or code of conduct/handbook (for staff).
- 9.3. Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the

school community, St Mary's will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.

9.4. 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.

10. Extremism

10.1. 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.

11. Further questions

11.1. If parents have further questions, they can contact a member of the senior leadership team at the school; the NSPCC has a parent online safety helpline which can help with general issues that are not school specific.

11.2. Staff should speak to James Phillips – Senior Teacher in the first instance, who may then call on the expertise of local authority advisers, LGfL SafeguardED or Professionals' Online-Safety Helpline (from UK SIC).

12. Links with other School Policies and Practices

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

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Computing Policy
- Online Safety Policy (formally e-Safety Policy)
- Approved Uses of AI (Teacher Guidance)
- Remote Education Policy (incorporating Microsoft Teams User Agreement)
- Taking and Use of Photographs
- AUP – Pupil and Staff Agreements (Acceptable Use Policy from LGfL)
- UKGDPR and privacy notices

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

| Name/s and job title of reviewer | Date of review | Date of governor approval | Suggested date for review |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Previous review | May 2021 | May 2021 | - |
| Mr James Phillips – Senior Teacher | February 2026 | | February 2027 |

APPENDIX A

St. Mary's Protocols and Guidelines for X and Facebook

@PutneySMPS – Not currently in use

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

Remember that our school X and Facebook accounts are public accounts on social networking services – all posts and published information will be available to be read and searched by anybody.

School's Use:

- Our school X and Facebook accounts are to be used as a blog to record school activity
- Our school X and Facebook accounts will provide announcements and reminders, as well as sharing school related videos and photographs
- Our school X and Facebook accounts will sometimes publish links that reference established and known organisations that the school deems as appropriate and useful
- Our school X and Facebook accounts will restrict the tweeting/posting/publishing of material that contain photographs or videos showing the faces of children and staff from our school (exceptions to this will only be published with full permissions of children and staff featured)
- Our school X and Facebook accounts will never tweet/post/publish 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 X and Facebook accounts will not follow the personal accounts of parents, carers, staff, children or anyone else
- Our school X and Facebook accounts 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 X and Facebook accounts will block or report any user that is disrespectful, offensive, inappropriate or misuses the service
- Our school X and Facebook accounts will be monitored by the school

User's Use:

- You must be 13 years or over to use X and Facebook
- Do not post or publish material that contain photographs or videos showing the faces of children and staff from our school
- Do not post or publish any kind of personal information such as full names, age, contact numbers, where you live etc.
- Never post or publish something that may upset someone else
- Never post or publish spam or advertisements
- Never post or publish something that would put the school into disrepute
- Remember that not everyone is who they say they are – use these services with caution
- 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 X and Facebook services. Use of X and Facebook services is at own risk. X terms and conditions apply. Facebook terms and conditions apply.