



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY INCLUDING USE OF MOBILE PHONES & DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

To love, to serve and learn.

We are a school family journeying together in God's love.
We serve each other to achieve our best.
We learn in fun and creative ways,
respecting everyone's gifts.

Policy Details

Policy Date: **September 2026**

Policy Status: **Statutory**

Policy Review Cycle: **Every 2 years**

Next Review Date: **September 2028**

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many adults, young people and even children. The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in many ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly.

We recognise that using social media sites also bring risks. This document gives clarity to the way in which social media is to be used by pupils, school staff and Governors at St Edward's Catholic Primary School, and how we expect it to be used by parents and carers in relation to their communication with, and about, school.

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by staff (employees), Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as '**school representatives**' for brevity.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs, for example Blogger Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram etc.
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter

All school representatives 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 the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Key areas of use:

- A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
- B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.
- C. Comments posted by parents/carers.
- D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.
- E. Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography.

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school.

1. Social network sites should never be accessed /used within school.
2. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate.
3. No pupil under 13 should be accessing Facebook. Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a no under 13 registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13- to 16-year-olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

"If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us"

4. Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
5. The school e-safety policy states sanctions for breaching the policy.

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.

It is probable that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to **protect their professional reputation** by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Terms of Use - Social Networking applications:

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use which apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives.

This includes, but is not limited to: public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. St Edward's Catholic Primary School expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with the guidelines above and the Terms of Use below.

School representatives (staff / Governors and pupils where appropriate):

1. **Must never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
2. Should consider very carefully the implications of having parents as 'friends'.
3. They should not add parents as 'friends' - and ought to consider the professional conflict that may exist if they have 'friends' who then become parents at our school.
4. Must not post pictures of school events without the Headteacher's consent.
5. Must not use social networking sites within lesson times.
6. Should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
7. Must not post abusive / negative comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues, including Governors.
8. Should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People'.
9. Must not publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. *This includes, but is not limited to, material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.*
10. Must not use social media for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
11. Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
12. Must not discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents.
13. Should not identify themselves as a 'representative' of the school.
14. References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head Teacher
15. Must be aware that if their social media activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.
16. No member of staff or Governor should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites
17. No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18. *This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.*

18. Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher in writing.

19. It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.

Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance or LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

C. Comments posted by parents/carers.

Parents and carers also have a duty to act responsibly when using Social Media.

1. Parents should not post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites.
2. Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
3. Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

Please refer to **Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents and Carers.**

D. Dealing with incidents of online bullying.

Any form of bullying is unacceptable and the use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate would be covered by policy this irrespective of when/where the post was made. Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens. We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they will:

1. Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy
2. Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate.
3. This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

If a parent/carers is making threats on-line against a member of school staff - this is counted as bullying and may result in police involvement.

E. Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records.

Staff, visitors, volunteers, students and pupils are **not permitted** to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children.

All pupil mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day. See: Mobile Phones Policy

Procedures

1. School will seek parental consent to use photographs and video on their website or to publicise the school.
2. The school's digital cameras and / or class phones must not leave the school premises (unless on an educational visit). Photographs are printed on the premises by staff and images are then removed from the camera memory.
3. School iPads will also be used in the school setting and on trips to take pictures. School iPads must not be taken home by staff if they have children's pictures stored on them.
4. Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and learning and displayed in school and in albums or a child's development records for children and parent carers, governors, OFSTED, LA officers to look through.
5. Often photographs may contain other children in the background.
6. Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by school staff only via video and photographs.
7. Staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school.
8. Visitors may only use their phones in the foyer or outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.
9. The use of cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets.
10. Staff are asked not to make personal calls during their working hours. Urgent telephone calls may be made by staff through the office telephones or their own mobiles if deemed necessary and by arrangement with the Headteacher.
11. Urgent calls for staff must come through the office and staff will be informed immediately.
12. All school phones and iPads should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.
13. Photographs of children may only be stored on teacher's laptops, the Head teacher's laptop, the Office computer, school iPads and the school secure Google Drive.
