



The Federation of the Church Schools of
Shalfleet and Freshwater & Yarmouth

Together for a Brighter Future

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Approved by	FGB
Portfolio	Safeguarding
Approved on	Spring 2026
Review date	Spring 2027
Review Cycle	1 Year
Policy Type	Statutory
Ratified/FGM Date	

Signed _____ Date _____

Rationale

The Federation is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social media tools to interact with one another. Some of the most frequently used are; Facebook, Snapchat, Skype, X-box live, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram, but also maintaining pages on the internet such as Wikipedia – this list is not exhaustive and school recognises that this is a constantly changing environment.

The widespread availability and use of social media tools brings opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. It is also crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to provide the balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice for staff members on how to use social media responsibly, safeguarding the children and protect the reputation of the school.

Scope

This policy applies to the governing body, all teaching and other staff, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. For the purpose of this policy these individuals are collectively referred to as staff members

Aims

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

Legal framework

Everyone working on behalf of the school is bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality, and
- The Data Protection Act 2018.
- GDPR regulations

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality.
- School business records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations.

Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003, and
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
- Data Protection Act 2018

Social Media for personal use in work time

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted unless authorised by the Headteacher.

Social Media tools as part of School Service

- All proposals for using social media as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Headteacher first and should be created according to the requirements in Appendix 1.
- There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with pupils or others. Staff must not create sites which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.
- Sites must not breach the terms and conditions of social media service providers, particularly with regard to minimum age requirements.
- Official school sites can only be used for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another.
- Staff members must at all times act in the best interests of children when creating, participating or contributing content to social media sites and act in accordance with the terms of use below.
- Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia or other wiki's in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address which will therefore appear as if to come from the employer itself.

Terms of Use for Social Media tools:

Be professional, responsible and respectful

- Publish no 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, abusive or any other nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff members should not identify themselves as employees of The Federation of the Church Schools of Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet in their personal web space. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- Keep your personal and professional lives separate. Do not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school and your personal interest.
- Staff members should not use social media tools for actions that would put them in breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, Single Equalities, Anti-Bullying policies, GDPR and Data Protection Policies or any other staff related policy.
- Staff members must not have contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- Staff members must not use Social Media to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents. Similarly, no reference should be made to school activities or events unless approved by the headteacher.
- School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- The school's logos must not be used or published on a personal web space.
- Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. These sites blur the lines between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships.
- Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff should refer to the E-safety policy for further guidance on internet safety.
- Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

Guidance for staff on connections with pupils on Social Networks

- No member of staff should interact with:
 - any pupil in the school or from other schools on social networking sites unless agreement of the parent(s)/guardian(s) has been obtained.

- 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 unless express permission to do so has been obtained from the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school.

Guidance for Parents and Pupils on using social networking

- No pupil under 13 should have social networking site accounts.
- Pupils with mobile phones must hand them into the office at the beginning of the school day.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.
- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to a grown up at home or your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.
- The school has a robust e -safety programme where children are taught to keep themselves safe online and are educated about how to use the internet safely

Child protection guidance

If the head teacher receives a disclosure from a pupil, parent or staff member that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should record the disclosure in line with the Safeguarding policy and refer the matter to the LADO. The advice from the LADO will be followed.

Cyber Bullying

Where a disclosure of bullying is made, the school has the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy where the escalation process is made clear.

If parents / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment.

Filtering and Monitoring

We operate robust Filtering and Monitoring system at both school sites. Our filtering at Freshwater and Yarmouth is provided by LightSpeed which is DFE compliant and Shalfleet uses E2BN which was part of the DFE approved Connect the Classrooms scheme. Our internet monitoring is provided by Classroom Cloud it records each key stroke irrespective of where it is typed.

The system provides the School Business Manager (SBM) and the admin team with alerts to any concerning activity and/or key words which raise the alarm. The School Business Manager receives the alerts regarding staff members and the office admin receive the alerts for the pupils. Each alert is saved on the computer system and any that cause concern are followed up the admin team who pass this information to the DSL who manages the concern as appropriate through our Safeguarding procedures.

Related Policies:

Safeguarding
Staff Code of Conduct
Anti-bullying
E-safety

Appendix 1

Social Media Site Creation Approval Form

Use of social media on behalf of The Federation of the Church Schools of Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet must be approved prior to setting up sites.

DETAILS	
Name of author of site	
PURPOSE OF SETTING UP SOCIAL MEDIA SITE (please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site)	
What are the aims you propose to achieve by setting up this site?	
What is the proposed content of the site?	
PROPOSED AUDIENCE OF THE SITE Please tick all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of The Federation of the Church Schools of Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet <input type="checkbox"/> School staff <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members <input type="checkbox"/> External organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public <input type="checkbox"/> Others; please provide details	
PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SITE Please tick all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of The Federation of the Church Schools Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet <input type="checkbox"/> School staff <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members <input type="checkbox"/> External organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public <input type="checkbox"/> Others; please provide details	
ADMINISTRATION OF THE SITE	
Names of administrators (the site must have at least 2 approved administrators)	
Names of moderators (the site must have at least 2 approved moderators)	
Who will vet external contributors?	
Who will host the site?	<input type="checkbox"/> The Federation of the Church Schools of Freshwater & Yarmouth and Shalfleet <input type="checkbox"/> Third party; please give host name
Proposed date of going live	
Proposed date for site closure	

How do you propose to advertise for external contributors?	
If contributors include children or adults with learning disabilities how do you propose to inform and obtain consent of parents or responsible adults?	
What security measures will you take to prevent unwanted or unsuitable individuals from contributing or becoming 'friends' of the site?	

APPROVAL

<u>Headteacher</u>	Name	
	Signature	
	Date	