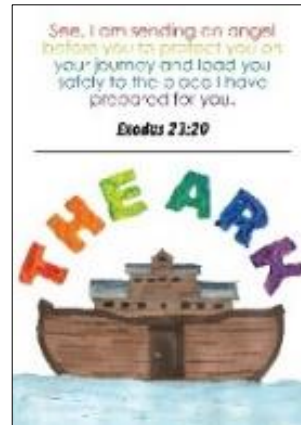


St Michael's CE (A)



Primary School

School Social Media Policy

The Lord says, 'For I know the plans for you...plans to give you hope and a future.'

Jeremiah 29 verse 11

Date Approved: Wednesday 10th July 2024

Review date: July 2025

Signed: *Linda Platt* (Chair of Curriculum and School Improvement)

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. In our school our Christian vision, mission and values shape all we do; and as such, we ensure the safeguarding of children is a priority for all adults involved with the school (Mission Statement).

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 the policy is to:

- Safeguard all children
- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

Definitions and Scope

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include X (Formerly, Twitter), Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper site.

Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds.

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 the school's Equalities, Safeguarding and On line 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.

Use of Social Media in practice

1. Personal use of social media

- School staff communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.
- Any communication received from children at the school, on any personal social media sites, must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection (currently, the Headteacher).
- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above.
- Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account.
- Staff should not use personal email 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 Headteacher.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

2. School-sanctioned use of social media

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum to support pupil learning, and currently the school has an official Facebook page.

The purpose of having a school Facebook page is

- To continue to advance our school communication system with information shared via Facebook, along with the existing methods of newsletters, text messages, email, and the school website.
- To publicise school events and increase awareness about school fundraising.
- To announce any updated information that appears on our website via Facebook.
- To highlight positive school achievements in a forum where they can be shared by the school community.
- To make school announcements (e.g. school closure due to snow)
- To use Facebook as a means of marketing the school to a wider audience.
- To engage the community that St Michael's CE (A) Primary School serves and act as a key component of our school's online presence.
- To facilitate communication and networking opportunities between parents especially new or prospective parents.
- To maintain contact with past parents and past pupils.

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

- Staff should set up 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 and will be linked to an official school email account.
- The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the Headteacher before access is permitted for parents.
- 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, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying 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 removed and reported to the Headteacher and one of the approved administrators.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of parents through social media where the message is not public.
- The policy will be published on the school website under the 'Key Information' page.

Administration of Social Media Communication

The Headteacher will identify those members of staff who will have administrator rights for the different social media sites.

Currently the administrators for the school's facebook page are:

Mrs Kate Jackson (Headteacher)

Mrs Liz Morton (SLT)

Mrs Sarah Harty (Business Manager)

Miss Nichole Cooper (Teacher)

Miss Emma Warrilow (Teacher)

Points to Note

Facebook lists a minimum age requirement of 13, and all parents are reminded that children under the age of 13 should not be on Facebook.