

# **ALDERMAN RICHARD HALLAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Social Media Use Policy**



# Social Media Use Policy

## **Purpose**

Social media can blur the definitions of personal and working lives, so it is important that all members of staff take precautions in order to protect themselves both professionally and personally online.

All staff should be very conscious of both their professional reputation and that of the school when they are online. All members of staff are strongly advised, in their own interests, to take steps to ensure that their personal information and content is not accessible to anybody who does not or should not have permission to access it. All staff must also be mindful that any content shared online cannot be guaranteed to be “private” and could potentially be seen by unintended audiences, which may have consequences including civil, legal and disciplinary action being taken. Staff are expected to ensure that their privacy settings are set appropriately – many sites have a variety of options to choose from which change regularly and may be different on different devices, as it could lead to their content accidentally being shared with others.

Staff should be very careful when publishing any information, personal contact details, video or images, etc. online; they should consider if they would feel comfortable about a current or prospective employer, colleague, child in their care or parent or carer, viewing or sharing their content. If the answer is no, then staff should consider if it should be posted online at all. It is very important to be aware that sometimes content shared online, even in jest, can be misread, misinterpreted or taken out of context, which can lead to complaints or allegations being made. All staff must be aware that, as professionals, they must be cautious to ensure that the content they post online does not bring the school or their professional role into disrepute.

If staff have a social networking account, it is advised that they do not to accept pupils (past or present) or their parents or carers as “friends” on a personal account. If they do, they may be giving them access to personal information and allowing them to make contact inappropriately through unregulated channels. They may also be giving staff access to their personal information and activities, which could cause safeguarding concerns. Staff are expected to use their work provided email address, work phone number or Seesaw to contact children and/or parents and carers – this is essential in order to protect themselves as well as the wider community. If members of staff have a pre-existing relationship with a child, parent or carer that may compromise this or have any queries or concerns about this, then they should speak to the Online Safety Co-ordinators (Mr W Holder and Miss L Ellis), a Designated Safeguarding Lead or their Line Manager. The form on the back of the Staff Code of Conduct Policy should also be completed in this situation.

Documents called “Cyberbullying: Supporting School Staff”, “Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff” and “Safer practice with Technology” are available to be downloaded directly from [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com), [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk) and [www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying). Staff can also visit or contact the Professional Online safety Helpline [www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/about/helpline) for more advice and information on online professional safety.

All staff should be aware of the Acceptable Use Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct and the importance of maintaining professional boundaries online. Staff should also be aware of KCSIE 2025 and the 4 key areas of risk relating to online safety (Point 135) to further ensure appropriate use, as well as the Online Safety Act 2023. Failure to follow this guidance and the school policy could lead to disciplinary action, so it is crucial that all staff understand how to protect themselves online. Staff should speak to their line manager, a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr W Holder or Miss L Ellis if they have any queries or concerns regarding this.

### **Additional content regarding online participation on behalf of the school**

The principles and guidelines below set out the standards of behaviour expected as an employee of the school. If staff are participating in online activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the school, then the expectations are that they should:

- Be professional and remember that they are an ambassador for the school. Staff should disclose their position but always make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the school.
- Be responsible and honest at all times and consider how the information they are publishing could be perceived.
- Be credible, accurate, fair and thorough.
- Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within school, including libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection as well as equalities laws.
- Be accountable and do not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school unless they are authorised to do so.
- Always inform their line manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Senior Leadership Team of any concerns, such as criticism or inappropriate content posted online.

### **The school's use of social media for communication:**

- Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School has three main social media accounts: ARH Primary on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for parental communication and announcements, as well as Seesaw for celebrating children's work.
- Announcements made on ARH Primary will relate to school and year group events and messages. These posts will not be responded to after the post has gone online and parents and carers should speak to their child's class teachers or ring the school for further information.
- Posts on Seesaw will be checked against GDPR to ensure children are permitted to have their name and/or photo on learning journeys. This account will be updated regularly by each year group and parents and carers are encouraged to comment on or like posts.
- In the event of a crisis, social media will be our primary method of communicating with parents and carers alongside our email system. Therefore, parents and carers are encouraged to regularly check the school's social media pages for updated information.

## **Policy Links**

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following other policies and documents:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## **APPENDIX 1: Procedure for dealing with the misuse of social media.**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Social networking sites such as Facebook, TikTok, Twitter and Instagram are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites are used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff.

### **2. The School's Complaints Policy**

- 2.1. Social networking sites are not the forum in which parents, carers or staff should be raising issues about the school.
- 2.2. Alderman Richard Hallam Primary School encourages parents, carers and other members of the school community to speak to school staff directly and all staff will accommodate parents and carers as best they can to meet with them.
- 2.3. Should parents or carers have concerns or complaints regarding school staff, school procedures or processes, they should follow the school's Complaints Policy (available on the school website) or contact Mr S. Beardsmore, the school's Complaints Co-ordinator.

### **3. Responding to inappropriate posts by parents or carers**

- If an inappropriate comment/image/video, including via the use of AI, is posted online about the school or its staff, the school's response will depend upon varying factors, such as the nature of the material posted, the type of site, etc.
- 3.1. The school will make initial contact with the appropriate staff member; however, the school may also seek advice from its legal representatives should the circumstances warrant this.
  - 3.2. In most cases, the school will first look to discuss the matter with the parent or carer and ask them to remove the material in question.
  - 3.3. Following discussion with the parent or carer, should the posts either not be removed or continue, then the school will write to the parent or carer.
  - 3.4. If steps 3.2 - 3.3 have not resolved the issue, the school will consider instructing its legal representatives to contact the parent or carer directly.
  - 3.5. Where the material posted raises any safeguarding concerns, the school will follow the normal safeguarding process.
  - 3.6. In some cases, the school may wish to contact the website operator and ask them to remove the material or ask their legal representatives to do this on their behalf.
  - 3.7. At present, there is no single piece of legislation in the UK that is specifically designed to deal with inappropriate postings on social networking sites. However, there are several crimes that could be committed by inappropriate use of social media. These may fall under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or Protection from Harassment Act 1997. In such circumstances, the school should consider reporting the matter to the Police. In addition, repeated incidents of behaviour amounting to harassment, or causing a person to fear that violence will be used against them, can amount to a criminal offence and would be reported to the Police.
  - 3.8. In some cases, even if a crime has not been committed, the school may apply to the court for a civil injunction against the person causing the harassment.

NB. Section three is not an exhaustive list of actions available to the school and other legal avenues may be deemed appropriate. Each instance will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.