St Austin's Catholic

Primary School

To work is to pray

Social Media Policy

Autumn (1) 2022

Policy agreed by the Full Governing Body of St Austin's Primary School:

On: ……..18th October 2022…........ **Signed:……**   *A Mary Davi*
(Chair of Governors)

To be reviewed:…….Autumn (1) 2024………

"In our school, where everyone is special,
we will love and serve as Jesus taught"

"En nuestro colegio todos somos especiales.
Amaremos y serviremos como Jesús nos enseñó"

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Laborare est Orare

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Social Media Policy

Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) However, some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

St Austin's Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by its staff, parents, carers and children.

Scope
This policy is subject to the St Austin's staff code of conduct, safeguarding, whistleblowing policy, e-safety policy and acceptable use agreements.

This policy:
- Applies to **all** staff and to **all** online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the St Austin's Primary School.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education e.g. safeguarding annual HT updates, e-safety training (SIP)
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school.

St Austin's Primary School respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using St Austin's Primary School name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy. These professional communications are the property of the school and are not allowed to be shared with other members of the public without seeking clarification. This is deemed as a breach of GDPR.

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with, or impacts on St Austin's school then that member of staff is **not** communicating on behalf of St Austin's Primary School and will need to complete an appropriate disclaimer to clarify this. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy and could lead to disciplinary procedures depending on the context of the communication.

Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon St Austin's Primary School are therefore outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with pupils/students are also considered.

Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a St Austin's Primary School social media account (Twitter) for teaching and learning purposes but must seek clarification from the Headteacher and consider whether this is appropriate and the potential implications in doing so.

Organisational control

Roles & Responsibilities
- **SLT**
  - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use.
  - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
  - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents.
  - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
  - Approve the initial account creation with governors

- **Administrator/Moderator will be the Headteacher (possible IT Manager)**

  - Create the account following SLT approval
  - Store account details, including passwords securely which are not shared
  - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
  - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)

- **Staff**
  - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
  - Attending appropriate training e.g. safeguarding and e-safety training
  - Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content teachers and support staff have posted via St Austin's Primary School accounts
  - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming St Austin's school directly.

Process for creating new accounts

St Austin's Primary School community has considered a specific social media account which will help teachers in their work, e.g. whole school Twitter account. Anyone wishing to create a separate account must present a case to the Leadership Team which covers the following points:
-
- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two **staff members** should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed?

Following consideration by the SLT and governors an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT will be satisfied that anyone running and monitoring a social media account on behalf of St Austin's Primary School has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by our school, but could be working on behalf of the school in a professional capacity (e.g MGL) .

Monitoring

St Austin's Primary School accounts will be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably school-based days, including some holidays). Any comments or queries; specifically, complaints made through those accounts must be reported to SLT who will respond within 48 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring in the first instance is by the class teacher, followed by the SMT/ SLT and possible IT manager. Intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a St Austin's Primary School social media account.

Behaviour

- St Austin's Primary School requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies. E.g. Staff code of conduct.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff.
- St Austin's Primary School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using through our social media account, staff must report this to SLT and not respond.
- Unacceptable conduct, by either staff or parents (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by St Austin's Primary School and must be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate using the suite school polices.
- The use of personal social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with St Austin's Primary School policies. St Austin's Primary School permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites when out of hours. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant school duties, disciplinary action may be taken following any investigation.
- St Austin's Primary school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, St Austin's Primary School will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, St Austin's Primary School will report the matter to the police or LADO and other relevant external agencies, and may act according to the disciplinary policy.

Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection or GDPR laws, or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of St Austin's school, SLT will handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, St Austin's Primary School users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken.
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed St Austin's Primary School protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:
- Engaging
- Conversational

- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images

St Austin's Primary School 'use of images' can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.
- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with our digital and video images policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected. A list of children can be accessed through the office/ IT manager.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student/pupil pictures online other than via St Austin's Primary School owned social media accounts or school website.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on St Austin's Primary School or social media account. Pupils should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any St Austin's Primary School list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Personal use
- **Staff**
  - Personal communications are those made via a personal social media account. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on St Austin's school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of St Austin's Primary School.
  - Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon St Austin's Primary School are outside the scope of this policy.
  - Where excessive personal use of social media in St Austin's Primary School is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken
  - St Austin's Primary School permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites.
- **Pupil/Students**
  - Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of St Austin's Primary School on any personal social media network account.
  - The whole school computing curriculum should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
  - Pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the St Austin's Primary School. Any offensive or inappropriate comments made by the pupil will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy
- **Parents/Carers**
  - If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
  - St Austin's Primary School is proactive in informing parents to support the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
  - Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the St Austin's Primary School. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, St Austin's Primary School will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the St Austin's complaints procedures, which are found on the school website.

Monitoring posts about the school
- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about St Austin's school.
- St Austin's Primary School should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Managing St Austin's Primary School social media accounts

- Our account will be @StAustinsSchool

The Do's
- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school.
- Users will be directed to sign that they have read and understood this policy and will follow it.
- Make it clear who is posting content e.g. Whole school Twitter account only
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- always express opinions about the context in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, seek SLT advice
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process -
- Turn off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts
- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring St Austin's Primary School into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation regarding GDPR
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of St Austin's Primary School accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Policy Review Date – Autumn 2024

Appendix

Managing your personal use of Social Media:
- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life.
- Don't use St Austin's Primary School logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Check your digital footprint
- Check your personal information is private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem