

Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School



Social Media for Pupils Policy

**“God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble.”
Psalm 46:1**

Mission Statement

At our Parochial school we aim to provide a stimulating and caring environment in which every child flourishes, with Christianity at the heart of all we do.

Aims

At Whickham Parochial we believe that every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood, celebrate their individuality and reach their full potential. We aim to do this through:

- Creating a caring school family living by Christian values.
- Celebrating everyone's strengths and efforts.
- Valuing the opportunities we have to contribute to our community and the wider world.
- Offering wide ranging quality experiences that stimulate children's minds.
- Encouraging respect for others, positive behaviour and good manners, enabling all children to feel secure and valued.
- Building strong links between school, home and church.
- Preparing children for future challenges in a changing world

We wish every child to take with them happy memories of Whickham Parochial into their future life.

1. Aims

This policy describes our position on pupil's use of social media outside of school. For staff use, please see our Online Safety Policy and our Code of Conduct.

Our school aims to:

Support pupils in protecting their mental health and wellbeing, and to provide them with strategies to cope in times of difficulty.

Educate pupils in how to behave online and how to keep themselves safe online.

Protect pupil's learning time and support them in being able to focus when in class.

Support pupils in making and maintaining friendships and developing strategies to cope when friendships come to an end.

Keep children safe.

Social media is an increasing presence in our world and in that of our pupils. Social Media is defined as any kind of tool that is used for sharing information, including blogs, photo sharing, video sharing, face book, twitter, mobile phone applications, texting, digital TV services, and other such internet-based programmes that give others access to your views and opinions.

Pupils are not encouraged to access social media, though we recognise that it has increasing prevalence and is difficult to avoid. In school, pupils do not have access to social media. though we do provide units of work which support pupils in acceptable and safe use of online platforms.

2. Legislation and guidance for this policy

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and its advice for schools on:

› [Teaching online safety in schools](#)

› [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) and [cyber-bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)

› [Relationships and sex education](#)

It reflects existing legislation, including but not limited to the [Education Act 1996](#) (as amended), the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). In addition, it reflects the [Education Act 2011](#), which has given teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by, if necessary, searching for and deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

The policy also takes into account the National Curriculum computing programmes of study.

3. Legislation and guidance for common apps, games and social media platforms

(Correct May 2023 – please note, this list is by no means exhaustive and parents should investigate the appropriateness of any online or games content)

Age	(The age limits are recommended, not statutory)
7	Roblox
12	Fortnite
13	Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, WeChat, Youtube, Wink, Omegle (though this leads very easily into an 18+ version)
16	WhatsApp, Flickr, LinkedIn, Tumbler
18	Almost all live-streaming / chat apps – some have a 13+ version.

The use of these apps, games and social media platforms is at parent's discretion. They will not be able to be accessed at school. We strongly recommend that these guidelines are adhered to, but it is not school's role to police this. We will, however, report to parents and record a safeguarding concern if we find that a pupil is at risk of harm due to their online activity.

4. Roles and responsibilities

School

Parochial will:

- Educate pupils in online safety (see below).
- Educate pupils in good citizenship online.
- Provide information to parents about online safety and potentially dangerous online trends.
- Provide or signpost guidance for parents who wish to know more about keeping children safe online.
- Inform parents if we are concerned that a child's activity online may be putting them at risk of harm and record this as a safeguarding concern.
- Liaise with outside agencies including social services and the police to support these agencies in keeping a child safe if this becomes necessary, in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Parochial will not:

- Police the use of online apps, games and social media outside of school.
- Intervene in arguments / disputes on any sort of online chat (unless it constitutes a safeguarding concern).

Parents

Though we will not enforce this, it is hoped that Parents will:

- Restrict access to devices with online capabilities until pupils are deemed old enough to manage the implications of this.
- Restrict access to social media, apps and games that are recommended for older pupils.
- Monitor their child's online history and behaviour.
- Apply firewalls / parental controls to keep their child safe online.

Pupils

Though we will not enforce this, it is hoped that Pupils will:

- Comply with any rules regarding online access that their parents put in place.
- Use only games and apps that are appropriate for their age and that their parents have approved.
- Make sure that anything they say or do online complies with our Golden Rule, "Treat others the way that you would like to be treated".
- Talk to an adult if anything happens online or in a game that they think is wrong or has worried them.
- Talk to an adult if they think someone else is putting themselves at risk online.

5. Educating pupils about online safety

Pupils will be taught about online safety as part of the curriculum:

All primary schools have to teach:

[Relationships education and health education](#) in primary schools

In **Key Stage 1**, pupils will be taught to:

- Use technology safely and respectfully, keeping personal information private
- Identify where to go for help and support when they have concerns about content or contact on the internet or other online technologies

Pupils in **Key Stage 2** will be taught to:

- Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly
- Recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- Identify a range of ways to report concerns about content and contact

By the **end of primary school**, pupils will know:

- That people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not
- That the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of respect for others online including when we are anonymous
- The rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them
- How to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met
- How information and data is shared and used online
- What sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context)
- How to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know

The safe use of social media and the internet will also be covered in other subjects where relevant.

Where necessary, teaching about safeguarding, including online safety, will be adapted for vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some pupils with SEND.

5. Educating parents about online safety

Parochial will raise parents' awareness of internet safety in letters or other communications home, and in information via our website. This policy will also be shared with parents.

If parents have any queries or concerns in relation to online safety, these should be raised in the first instance with the headteacher and/or the DSL.

Concerns or queries about this policy can be raised with any member of staff or the headteacher.

6. Cyber-bullying

6.1 Definition

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. (See also Parochial Good Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.)

6.2 Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

Parochial will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be.

Parochial is committed to instilling in our pupils empathy, respect and tolerance in order to reduce all kinds of bullying.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes Relationships and Health Education (RHE), and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, governors and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training (see section 11 for more detail).

Parochial also sends information on cyber-bullying to parents so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, Parochial will follow the processes set out in Parochial behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, Parochial will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

The DSL will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

7. Links with other policies

This social media safety policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Good Behaviour policy
- Online Safety Policy (including the Acceptable Use Agreement)

This policy will be reviewed annually or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Mrs R Walton
May 2023

