

Social Media Policy

Christ the King RC Primary School



Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This policy gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff at Christ the King RC Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

There are five key areas:

1. Use of social networking sites by pupils within school.
2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity.
3. Creation of Network accounts by staff or anyone associated with the school.
4. Comments posted by parents/carers.
5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites.

1. Use of social networking sites by pupils within school

The school's Acceptable Use Agreement outlines the rules for using IT in school and these rules therefore apply to use of social networking sites. Such sites should not be used/accessed in school unless under the direction of a teacher and for a purpose clearly apparent from the learning objective of the relevant learning experience. If social media sites are used then staff should carry out a risk assessment to determine which tools are appropriate. Social media sites to be used in school include blogging sites (Primary blogger) and Twitter. At the beginning of each academic year, parents are required to give permission for children to access these sites in school as well as permission for images of their child/child's work to be included on the site (see consent form).

2. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is possible that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff **must never** add pupils as 'friends' into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of 16).
- Staff are **strongly advised** not to add parents as 'friends' into their personal accounts.
- Staff **must not** post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.
- Staff **must not** use social networking sites within lesson times (for personal use).
- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff should read and comply with *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People*.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance and may lead to disciplinary action.

3. Creation of Network accounts by staff or anyone associated with the school

All social media services must be approved by the Headteacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

4. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the app, website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion.

- Parents/carers must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.
- Parents must not create social media accounts which appear to be associated with the school, i.e class group pages on Facebook.
- School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

5. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's e-safety and Anti-Bullying Policy makes sanctions regarding bullying using new technologies very clear.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy and will send the parents a letter. The Governing Body understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged." Furthermore, "Laws of defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written...which:

- Expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt.
- Cause (an individual) to be shunned or avoided.
- Lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society.
- Disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession." (National Association of Headteachers).

The school can take action against incidents that happen outside school if it:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school.
- Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public.
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records. **Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their own records during the school day.**

Procedures

- Under the Data Protection Act of 2018, school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders for anything not curriculum related. Photographs will be stored on the school network, which is password protected, and the images will be destroyed as per the school retention policy.
- The school's digital cameras must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit). Photographs are printed in the setting by staff and images are then removed from the camera memory.
- Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play/learning and displayed in school and in albums or in a child's development records for children and parent carers, governors, Ofsted, LA officers (on the password protected area of the school website), to look through.
- Often photographs may contain other children in the background.
- Events such as Sports Day, outings, concerts, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending. Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites. A verbal reminder will be given by staff at each event.
- On occasion, the school might like to use photographs of children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote the school via the website.
- Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school. **Visitors should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.**
- The use of cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets and nappy changing areas.
- All school cameras and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.

Safeguarding of Children: Mobile Phone Policy – the purpose and importance

Christ the King RC Primary School recognises that staff may need to have access to mobile phones on site during the working day. However, there have been a number of queries raised within the local authority and nationally regarding the use of mobile phones and other devices in educational settings. The concerns are mainly based around these issues:

- Staff being distracted from their work with children.
- The use of mobile phones around children.
- The inappropriate use of mobile phones.

Ensuring the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones

Christ the King RC Primary School allows staff to bring in mobile phones for their own personal use. However, they are not allowed to be used in the classrooms and/or when children are present, or in toilets, changing rooms or in the play areas at anytime. If staff fail to follow this guidance, this should be reported to the Headteacher who will decide if disciplinary action should be taken.

If staff need to make an emergency call which would mean breaching this policy, they must do so from a school phone or use their mobile phone in the staffroom.

- Mobile phone technology may not be used to take photographs anywhere within the Nursery grounds. There are digital cameras available within the EYFS setting and only these should be used to record visual information within the consent criteria guidelines of the local authority and the Nursery.
- Members of staff may only contact a parent/carer using the telephone in the school office. Personal mobiles **MUST NOT** be used.
- When children undertake a school trip or journey, mobile phone use by adult leaders should be limited to contact with the school office or venues being visited, except in emergencies and then only by approved telephones.
- Pupils should not use mobile phones within the school grounds and should not bring in mobile phones (or any other form of recording device) to school, except in exceptional circumstances about which the school has been informed. In such circumstances, the child's phone must be kept in the school office until they go home.

Pupil mobile phones are not permitted on school trips or the school bus journey.

Use of Mobile Phones for Volunteers and Visitors

Volunteers and visitors are not permitted to use mobile phones on the premises. If they wish to make or take an emergency call they may use the office telephone. Volunteers or visitors are not permitted to take photographs or recordings of the children without the Headteacher's permission.