

OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Parent & Community Use of Social Media Policy



Parent and Community Use of Social Media

Date	Review Date	Coordinator
September 2026	September 2027	Mrs M Brown Mrs D York Miss A West Ms J Brown Mrs L Vippond

This policy is a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos and enables consistency and quality across the school. This policy applies to all members of the school community and relates to the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Children's Act 1989
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff: Guidance for Local Authorities, Principals, School Staff, Governing Bodies and Proprietors of Independent Schools (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (2025) (DfE)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work With and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (2026) (DfE)

We acknowledge that social media has become part of everyday life with many people of all ages using social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, You Tube and Flickr on a daily basis. Social media can be accessed through a computer or mobile phone and allows people to stay in touch with each other.

We believe that social media offers many benefits for teaching and learning and also opportunities to engage, communicate and collaborate positively with pupils, parents and the wider community. The benefits of using social media outweigh the negative concerns that many have with research showing that the most discussed topics on these sites by young people are those dealing with homework and lessons.

We have a duty to safeguard all members of the school community as we realise there are risks to the use of social media with some users posting unsafe and inappropriate material, making abusive comments and using social media to groom and abuse children.

We believe we have in place an excellent online safety policy with practices and procedures fully embedded across the school with appropriate up to date awareness training in place for school personnel, pupils, parents/carers led by the designated e-Safety lead.

We actively encourage the positive use of social media in order to enhance the curriculum and learning, to enable parents to access school information, and in marketing the school effectively by promoting and explaining our values, aims and work. However, we remind all members of the school community that when using this social media platform that they do not make derogatory comments about the school or anyone connected with it.

We encourage and advise parents and others to speak directly to the Principal if they wish to make a complaint rather than using social media to make allegations against any aspect of the school, school personnel, pupils or anyone associated with the school.

We support all school personnel and will ensure that any abusive comments made about them on social media by pupils or parents/carers that are brought to our attention will be taken very seriously and will be reported to the appropriate authorities. We have a duty of care to ensure the safety and the well-being of pupils and school personnel.

We are aware that we cannot monitor every online comment made about the school whether they are positive or negative but we can work hard to ensure that parents/carers realise the benefits of using social media in order to engage, communicate and collaborate positively with the school.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To promote the benefits of social media with parents, pupils and school personnel.
- To use social media in order to engage, communicate and collaborate positively with pupils, parents and the wider community.
- To encourage the positive use of social media in order to enhance the curriculum, learning and communicating with parents.
- To safeguard all members of the school community as we realise there are risks to the use of social media.
- To ensure procedures are in place to deal with inappropriate or unlawful use of social media against all members of the school community and its associates.
- To share good practice within the school and with other schools.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team will:

- ensure the safety and e-Safety of all members of the school community;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- encourage the use of social media to develop teaching and learning;
- use social media to communicate, inform and gauge the views of parents and the wider community;
- organise social media awareness training for parents outlining:
 - the benefits of social media
 - the negative and inappropriate use of social media by parents
 - what is acceptable to post online

- how adverse comments posted online can affect the reputation of the school
- how adverse comments posted online can affect the reputation of individual members of the school personnel
- how social media can be used to communicate between school and home
- how social media can be used to communicate between home and school
- how parents can explain to their children what is acceptable to post online
- how parents can monitor how their children are using social media
- how we deal with the inappropriate use of social media by parents against the school
- how parents must use the 'traditional' complaints process rather than making a complaint by using social media
- organise a social media working party comprising the Principal, e-Safety coordinator, nominated governor and parent representatives to meet each term to discuss social media awareness training for parents and the further development of the use of social media for the benefit of the school;
- monitor the number of:
 - allegations made about school personnel
 - allegations made about pupils
 - complaints made about the school
 - complaints made about school personnel
 - defamatory statements made about the school
 - defamatory statements made about school personnel
 - negative or offensive comments made about school personnel
 - negative or offensive comments made about pupils
 - racist or homophobic comments
 - comments which threaten violence
 - unauthorised photographic images taken by parents/carers or pupils that are posted online of school personnel
- deal with online complaints made by parents/carers by:
 - supporting and reassuring school personnel that allegations/comments etc will be investigated and dealt with
 - establish what has been posted online and gather evidence
 - meet with those who have made allegations/comments to establish the reason of the online comments
 - requesting and ensuring the offending online posts are removed
 - establishing a successful outcome to the meeting
 - ensuring parents/carers are aware that any existing comments or any further posts could lead to legal action
 - arranging a further meeting this time with the chair of governors and the parents/carers if the matter is not resolved
 - discussing the way forward to resolve the problem
 - taking legal advice if the situation continues
- ensure the Home-School Agreement includes a statement asking parents not to use social media to make derogatory or malicious allegations about the school or anyone in the school community or to discuss sensitive school issues online;
- ensure the Acceptable User policy is current and includes a statement on the responsible use of social media by parents and that any concerns or issues they may have are not discussed on social media;
- ensure the Complaints policy is current and available to parents/carers;
- ensure Facebook and Twitter are used effectively to communicate to parents and pupils;
- work closely with the Governing Body and the coordinator to create a safe ICT learning environment;

- ensure regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate, effective and reasonable;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - monitoring learning and teaching through observing lessons
 - monitoring planning and assessment
 - speaking with pupils, school personnel, parents and governors
- annually report on the success and development of this policy.

Role of the Coordinator

The coordinator will:

- be responsible for the day to day e-Safety issues;
- undertake an annual e-safety audit in order to establish compliance with local authority guidance;
- ensure that all Internet users are kept up to date with new guidance and procedures;
- have editorial responsibility of the school Web site and will ensure that content is accurate and appropriate;
- ensure regular checks are made to ensure that the filtering methods selected are appropriate, effective and reasonable;
- undertake risk assessments in order to reduce Internet misuse;
- maintains a log of all e-Safety incidents;
- reports all e-Safety incidents to the Principal;
- ensure e-Safety is embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and other school activities;
- lead the development of this policy throughout the school;
- work closely with the Principal;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- provide guidance and support to all staff;
- provide training for all staff on induction and when the need arises;
- keep up to date with new developments and resources;
- review and monitor;
- annually report on the success and development of this policy.

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- comply with all aspects of this policy
- undertake appropriate training;
- report to the Principal any online allegations made about them;
- receive reassuring support from the Principal and the SLT when online allegations and comments are made about them;
- before using any Internet resource in school must accept the terms of the 'Responsible Internet Use' statement;
- promote e-Safety procedures such as showing pupils how to deal with inappropriate material;
- report any unsuitable website or material to the e-Safety Coordinator;
- will ensure that the use of Internet derived materials complies with copyright law;
- ensure e-Safety is embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and other school activities;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;

- be asked to support the e-Safety policy and to sign the consent form allowing their child to have Internet access;
- be invited to attend social media awareness training;
- support the school by using social media responsibly;
- receive school information via social media;
- not make online allegations against anyone in the school community;
- be aware that they must use the Complaints policy to make a complaint against the school;
- make their children aware of the e-Safety policy;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

Role of Pupils

Pupils will be aware of this policy and will be taught to:

- be critically aware of the materials they read;
- validate information before accepting its accuracy;
- acknowledge the source of information used;
- use the Internet for research;
- respect copyright when using Internet material in their own work;
- report any offensive e-mail;
- report any unsuitable website or material to the e-Safety Coordinator;
- know and understand the school policy on the use of:
 - mobile phones
 - digital cameras
 - hand held devices
- know and understand the school policy on the taking and use of photographic images and cyber bullying;
- learn to take pride in their work;
- produce work of a high standard;
- listen carefully to all instructions given by the teacher;
- ask for further help if they do not understand;
- participate fully in all lessons;
- participate in discussions concerning progress and attainment;
- treat others, their work and equipment with respect;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- talk to others without shouting and will use language which is neither abusive nor offensive;
- hand in homework properly completed and on time;
- wear correct uniform
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

Role of the School Council

The School Council will be involved in:

- determining this policy;
- discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
- organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
- reviewing the effectiveness of this policy

Internet Filtering and Use

We have a contract with a reputed and national Internet provider to manage a secure and filtered Internet service which enables us to safely access and use the Internet and all email. The Internet filtering service will be annually reviewed.

Access to the Internet is designed to protect pupils and school personnel by blocking the following content:

- adult content containing sexually explicit images
- violent content containing graphically violent images
- hate material content promoting violence or attack on individuals or institutions on the basis of religious, racial or gender grounds
- illegal drug taking content relating to the use or promotion of illegal drugs or the misuse or prescription drugs
- criminal content relating to the promotion of criminal and other activities
- gambling content relating to the use of online gambling websites
- non educational websites such as social networking sites

All users access the Internet in accordance with the School's Acceptable Internet Use & Agreement and will inform the ICT coordinator if at any time they find they have accessed inappropriate Internet sites.

When inappropriate material has been accessed the Internet Service Provider will be contacted and if necessary the Police.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

- School Handbook/Prospectus;
- School website;
- Staff Handbook;
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops;
- School events;
- Meetings with school personnel;
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters;
- Annual report to parents;
- Headteacher reports to the Governing Body;
- Information displays in the main school entrance;
- Text messages
- Email
- Social media:
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Virtual pin boards
 - School blog

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on induction which specifically covers: All aspects of this policy
 - Internet Social Networking
 - E-safety
 - Complaints
 - Home School Agreement
 - Communications

- Dealing with Allegations against School Personnel, Volunteers, Principal or Pupils
- Equal opportunities
- Inclusion
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment)

Principal:	Mrs M F Brown	Date:	September 2026
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