



# Social Media Policy

## ***LEARNING AND GROWING; SAFE IN GOD'S LOVE***

### **Key Details**

#### **Designated Safeguarding Leads:**

Mrs Louise Wilson (Lead)  
Mr Jonathan Forwood  
Mrs Katie Downs  
Mrs Sarah Cooper

#### **Named Governor with lead Safeguarding responsibility:**

Ms Loraine Bant

**Date written:**  
December 2024

**Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body:**  
To be ratified December 2024

**Date of next review:**  
September 2025

*This Policy will be reviewed **at least** annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.*

*This policy is based on the 2024-25 Online Safety Policy template provided by KCC's Education Safeguarding Service.*

# 1. Policy aims and scope

- This policy has been written by Leaders at Birchington CE Primary School, involving staff, learners and parents/carers, building on the Kent County Council's Education Safeguarding Services policy template, with specialist advice and input as required
- It takes into account the DfE statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' 2024, '[Early Years and Foundation Stage](#) 2023, '[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)' 2018, and our local [Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership](#) (KSCMP) procedures and support from the Kent County Council LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service .
- The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of the Birchington CE Primary School community when using Social Media.
  - Birchington CE Primary School recognises that online safety is an essential part of safeguarding and acknowledges its duty to ensure that all pupils and staff are protected from potential harm and inappropriate online material and/or behaviour when using Social Media.
  - As outlined in our Child Protection Policy, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Louise Wilson (Headteacher), is recognised as having overall responsibility for online safety.
- All aspects of safeguarding, including the use of social media, are an integral part of our school's Christian Vision.
- The policy applies to all use of social media; the term social media includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chatrooms and instant messenger apps or other online communication services.
- This policy applies to pupils, parents/carers and all staff, including the governing body, leadership team, teachers, support staff, external contractors, visitors, volunteers and other individuals who work for, or provide services on behalf of the setting (collectively referred to as "staff" in this policy).

# 2. Links with other policies

- This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans, including but not limited to:
  - Anti-bullying Policy
  - Staff Code of Conduct
  - Behaviour Policy
  - Child Protection Policy
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Curriculum policies, such as: Computing, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHCE), Citizenship and Relationships and Relationship & Sex Education (RSE)
  - GDPR and Data Protection
  - Image Use Policy
  - Online Safety Policy
  - Acceptable Use of technology Policies (AUPs)
  - Mobile and Smart Technology Policy

### **3. General social media expectations**

- Birchington CE Primary School believes everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity. Even though online spaces may differ in many ways, the same standards of behaviour are expected online as offline and all members of the Birchington CE Primary School community are expected to engage in social media in a positive and responsible manner.
- All members of the Birchington CE Primary School community are advised not to post or share content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others on any social media service.
- Pupil and staff access to social media, whilst using school provided devices and systems on site, is restricted. This is blocked via our Wi-Fi system using appropriate filtering and monitoring systems.
- The only exception is Leaders/Site/IT/FLO and Business Manager work phones having access to Whatsapp for communication within school in groups.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of Birchington CE Primary School community on social media will be taken seriously. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the appropriate policies, including Anti-bullying, Managing allegations against staff, Behaviour, Home school-agreements, Staff Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policies, and Child Protection.

### **4. Staff use of social media**

- The use of social media during school working hours for personal use is permitted for staff but only if this is in that member of staff's break time and the mobile phone is used in spaces where children are not present. Explicit permission must be sought from the Headteacher for the use of any type of personal mobile device within working hours for any reason.
- Safe and professional online behaviour is outlined for all members of staff, including volunteers, as part of our Code of Conduct, and Online Safety and Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.
- The safe and responsible use of social media sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction. Advice will be provided and updated via staff training and additional guidance and resources will be shared with staff as required on a regular basis.
- Any complaint about staff misuse of social media or policy breaches will be taken seriously in line with our Child Protection and Managing allegations against staff.

#### **4.1 Reputation**

- All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the school. Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media. This may include, but is not limited to:
  - Setting appropriate privacy levels on their personal accounts/sites.
  - Being aware of the implications of using location sharing services.

- Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
  - Logging out of accounts after use.
  - Using strong passwords.
  - Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as being that of the school.
- Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of Birchington CE Primary School on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information being linked with the setting and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
  - All staff are expected to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional reputation and legal framework. All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post on social media.
  - Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about pupils and their family members or colleagues, will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
  - Members of staff will notify the leadership team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

## **4.2 Communicating with pupils and their families**

- Staff will not use any personal social media accounts to contact pupils or their family members.
- All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or add any current or past pupils or their family members, as 'friends' on any personal social media accounts.
- Any communication from pupils and parents/carers received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the Headteacher/Lead DSL (or deputy DSL)
- Any pre-existing relationships or situations, which mean staff cannot comply with this requirement, will be discussed with the Lead DSL/Headteacher. Decisions made and advice provided in these situations will be formally recorded to safeguard pupils, members of staff and the school.

## **5. Official use of social media**

Birchington CE Primary School has a school Facebook page – Birchington CE Primary School. Only a limited number of adults can add posts to the page – SLT and the school secretary. Members of the public do not have the opportunity to comment on posts. The page is used for celebration and communication. Only those children whose parents have given written permission for their child to appear on the page do. The school plans to use Instagram in the same way.

## **6. Pupils use of social media**

- All pupils in the school are under the age of 13 and the minimum age limits for social media accounts start at 13. For safeguarding reasons, the school advises that no pupil has a social media account whilst at Birchington CE Primary School. However, the school is aware that, despite this advice, many of our pupils do have social media accounts.

- The use of social media during school hours for personal use is not permitted for pupils.
- Many online behaviour incidents amongst children and young people occur on social media outside the school day and off the school premises. Parents/carers are responsible for this behaviour; however, some online incidents may affect our culture and/or pose a risk to children and young people's health and well-being. Where online behaviour poses a threat or causes harm to another pupil or member of the public, could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school when the pupil is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school, action will be taken in line with our Behaviour, Child Protection and Online Safety policies.
- Birchington CE Primary School will empower our pupils to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful way, and develop their resilience so they can manage and respond to online risks. Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupil as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding education approach using age-appropriate sites and resources. Further information is contained within our Child Protection and relevant specific curriculum policies RSHE and Computing.
- Whilst we do not use social media accounts in school, our computing curriculum might require the pupils to have pseudo accounts/'seats' in virtual classrooms in order to be able to access the programme and work. We will ensure that no personal details are shared (to comply with GDPR) and access is only given for the period of the work undertaken if this work requires the children to communicate with each other through these programmes.
- Pupils will be advised:
  - to consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details or information on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
  - to only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others, for example by making profiles private.
  - not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other appropriate adults' permission, and to only do so when a trusted adult is present.
  - to use safe passwords.
  - to use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
  - how to block and report unwanted communications.
  - how to report concerns on social media, both within the setting and externally.
- Any concerns regarding pupils use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate existing policies, including Anti-bullying, Child Protection and Behaviour.
- The Headteacher/Lead DSL (or deputy DSL) will respond to social media concerns involving safeguarding or child protection risks in line with our Child Protection policy.
- The Headteacher/Lead DSL has overall responsibility for Online Safety within the school but will liaise with the Online Safety Lead, Mr Jonathan Forwood and other members of staff, for example the IT Network Manager, Computing Hub Lead and other staff as necessary
- Sanctions and/or pastoral/welfare support will be implemented and offered to pupils as appropriate, in line with our Child Protection and Behaviour policy. Civil or legal action may be taken if necessary.
- Concerns regarding pupils use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media services and games.

## **7. Policy monitoring and review**

- Technology evolves and changes rapidly. Birchington CE Primary School will review this policy at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local concerns and/or any changes to our technical infrastructure.
- We will regularly monitor internet use taking place via our provided devices and systems and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is consistently applied. Any issues identified will be incorporated into our action planning.
- All members of the community will be made aware of how the school will monitor policy compliance: for example, AUPs, staff training, classroom management.

## **8. Responding to policy breaches**

- All members of the community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing school policies and procedures. This includes Child Protection, Staff Code of Conduct and Behaviour policy
- After any investigations are completed, leadership staff will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any policy or curriculum changes, as required.
- We require staff, parents/carers and pupils to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.
- All members of the community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.
- Pupils, parents and staff will be informed of our complaints procedure and staff will be made aware of the whistleblowing procedure.
- If we are unsure how to proceed with an incident or concern, the Headteacher/Lead DSL (or a deputy DSL) will seek advice from the [Education People's Education Safeguarding Service](#) or other agency in accordance with our Child Protection policy.