



At St Mary's we champion every child to be the **best that they can be**. Our knowledge-led curriculum therefore endeavours to develop our children's **character**, **core skills**, **creativity** and sense of **community**.

Supported by our school's vision, ethos and position as a junior school, we believe that our specialist knowledge of the Key Stage 2 age range ensures **improving outcomes, opportunities and experiences for all our children**. To achieve this, we are aspirational for our pupils, instilling high expectations, the passion, perseverance and stamina to succeed.

Use of School Social Media Policy

Ely St Mary's CofE Junior School



Written/reviewed by: Rachel Clarke

Date: 3rd June 2022

Next review due by: June 2025

1.1 Our Vision

Our vision is to:

*Provide opportunities for children, of all faiths and none, **to be the best that they can be**, in an environment where everyone is **valued, respected, and challenged**. In our school, individuals are supported in their personal journeys of learning, growth, and development within an ethos of **nurture, encouragement, and love**.*

Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds. (Hebrews 10:24)

1.2 Our School Values

At Ely St Mary's, we welcome and respect each other and all our visitors.

- **Responsibility** – We will be responsible for learning and our behaviour.
- **Excellence** – We will strive for excellence.
- **Spirituality** – We will open our eyes in awe and wonder at God's creation.
- **Perseverance** – We can achieve anything with effort, resilience, and the right strategies.
- **Energy** – We will give our best at all times: our focus, positive attention and determination to succeed
- **Caring** – We will care for each other, our school and our world.
- **Tolerance** – We will respect our differences.

2.1 Statement and Scope

*"Championing every child **to be the best that they can be**"*

Responsibility **E**xcellence **S**pirituality **P**erseverance **E**nergy **C**aring **T**olerance



As an employee and representative of Ely St Mary's Junior School, Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT), staff are expected to demonstrate best practices and appropriate etiquette on both personal and school social media accounts.

2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the judgements of staff using school social networking sites and the information that they provide through these by:

- Advising management and staff to ensure that children are safeguarded.
- Advising management and staff to ensure that the reputation of the school is not adversely affected through use of social networking sites.
- Ensuring that the school is not subject to legal challenge as a result of school employees using and providing information on social networking sites e.g. data protection, discrimination and other sensitive information.

2.3 Aims:

The aims of this policy is to ensure any use of school social media (currently limited to Facebook and Twitter), is in keeping with the following three tones:

1. **Celebratory:** our school social media accounts will highlight and celebrate pupil achievements, experiences and school successes.
- **Informative:** our school social media accounts will inform and remind members of our school community of key dates and events.
- **Form Positive Connections:** our school social media accounts will support our school in establishing positive connections with our school and local community; prospective parents; educational establishments and resources.

2.4 Community Inquiries

Whilst social media is used as a form of communication by millions worldwide, two-way communication is not an aim of Ely St Mary's School social media. We hope our online community understands that staff are unable to routinely reply to dialogue on social media due to the important job of teaching children.

We do, however, welcome all users and visitors of Ely St Mary's Junior social media pages to leave respectful comments and positive affirmations only, in line with our school vision and RESPECT ethos.

Questions or queries should continue to be directed to the teachers via Class Dojo or the office via phone 01353 662163 or email office@esm.school (responses within 2 working days).

2.5 Conduct Guidelines

When is approval needed post a message on the school social media?

- School social media accounts are accessed only by members of SLT and the office coordinator via the secure platform, Hootsuite. Hootsuite enables posts to be drafted and scheduled ahead of time, thus allowing for consultation and collaboration regarding content and timing before going live.
- Typically, school will not post more than once daily.

What kind of information is allowed to be posted on school social media?

- Content must be in keeping with the school vision and RESPECT ethos and in line with the policy's three aims: celebratory; informative; forming positive connections.
- Content should be complemented by a photo or graphic wherever possible (with a description included using alt text). Posts should be user-friendly in their length and wording.
- Posts should be evenly reflective of the whole school community, covering all year groups and a range of curriculum subjects, experiences and wider achievements. St Mary's is proud to be

recognised as an inclusive school and therefore posts will not be 'elite' in nature but celebratory of everyone's achievements.

- Posts will be generally be collective in nature (group, class, cohort). On an occasion where it is relevant for individual acknowledgement (e.g. winner of a local competition), only first names will be used for pupils. No other personal or identifying information will be shared.
- School social media will not be used to express personal opinion.

Who can be featured on school social media?

- Parents are able to express consent for their children to feature on school publications and social media as part of the admissions processes.
- A parent or carer is able to change this permission at any stage of their child's school career by contacting the school office. In the event that pictures were posted with permission which is thereafter retracted, the school will endeavour to delete any prior posts but are not able to guarantee that those posts had not already been seen or shared further.
- All posts including pupil photos are checked against the permissions list held centrally on the school MIS system. If staff are uncertain, the child's photo will not be used, or a telephone call will be made to confirm permissions by a parent/carers with parental responsibility.

What will be shared on social media during a critical incident?

- In the event of a critical incident or similar, school social media will not be used unless instructed by the Headteacher only to relay agreed information to the parent community.
- In such a scenario, the office coordinator will be asked to cancel any scheduled posts via the Hootsuite calendar to ensure all channels of communication are kept clear, reducing risk of confusion.

It is important to protect everyone from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites. How are staff advised to do this at St Mary's Junior?

- Code of Conduct:** St Mary's Code of Conduct (paragraph 8.1-8.7) states "Communication between pupils and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries." This principle applies to the use of social networking sites. Staff should refer to the Code of Conduct in full.
- Online Behaviour:** The way in which school staff present and conduct themselves on social networking sites can have an impact on the public perception of the school and influence the way in which those staff members are perceived by pupils and parents. In their use of social networking sites, staff should be aware that their online behaviour could affect their professional standing, dignity and perception of their integrity.
- Precautions:** It is recommended that school staff take adequate precautions when using their own and school social networking sites/applications, both in vetting material that could be connected to them (through their own profile and information added about them) and through the use of appropriate security settings. Advice includes:
 - Changing display name - using first and middle name, a maiden name, spell surnames backwards, a nickname, or a contraction.
 - Changing profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, **ensure the image is professional**
 - Checking privacy settings regularly
 - Taking care when tagging other staff members in images or posts
 - Do not share anything publicly that you would not be happy showing members of the school community.
 - Avoid making any comments about your job, your colleagues, your school or pupils online.
 - It is recommended staff do not identify their school on social networking sites as this could directly link their behaviour outside of work with the reputation of the school.
- Safeguarding:** School employees should not be "friends" with pupils on social networking sites (see Code of Conduct).
- What to do if...A pupil adds a staff member on social media**

In the first instance, staff are advised to ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing their profile and check privacy settings again, considering a change of display name or profile picture. If the pupil asks the staff member about the friend request in person, the child will be informed that staff are not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils. If they persist, staff are asked to take a screenshot of the request and any accompanying messages and notify a DSL about what is happening straight away.

vi. **What to do if...A parent adds a staff member on social media**

Adults are advised not to have online friendships with parents or carers of pupils, or members of the governing body/trustees. Where such online friendships exist, adults must ensure that appropriate professional boundaries are maintained. Staff are also advised to bear in mind that responding to one parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both them and other teachers at the school; pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything posted, shared, commented on or are tagged in. If staff wish to decline the offer or ignore a message, consider drafting a stock response to let the parent know why you're doing so.

vii. **What to do if...staff have concerns** where pupils behave inappropriately online with staff or vice versa? This should be reported immediately to either a DSL as a safeguarding cause for concern or via the Headteacher within the whistleblowing policy.

3.1 Questionable Content

If within the school social media pages the school or staff are being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive, staff must not retaliate or respond in anyway.

Staff are advised to save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred. They can then report the material to Facebook or relevant social network and ask them to remove it.

If the perpetrator is a current school pupil or staff member, the school's own behaviour policy, antibullying policy, mediation and staff disciplinary procedures will be used to deal with online incidents as appropriate.

If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff will invite them to a meeting to address their concerns, address any reasonable complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material.

If the comments are threatening, racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, the school reserve the right to contact the police.

3.2 Consequence of a Breach

Any deliberate breaches of this policy by staff will be considered under the school's disciplinary rules and procedures.

Accidental breaches of this policy, will be reported to the academy's Data Protection Officer (DEMAT) and may also be considered under the school's disciplinary rules and procedures as required.

4.1 Annual Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by SLT and the local governing body. All employees will be provided with access to a copy although school social media will only be accessible to the senior leadership team and office coordinator.

4.2 Other Related Policies

- Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Antibullying Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Rules & Procedures
- Use of Mobile Phones & Personal Devices
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy