# Social Media Policy

# To Include Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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## Aim of policy:

The aim of this Social Media Policy is to promote the safe, responsible and appropriate use of social media by all members of the **Park School** community. The School recognises that social media can provide valuable opportunities for communication, collaboration, learning and community engagement. However, it also presents risks relating to safeguarding, reputation, privacy, wellbeing and professional conduct. This policy sets out clear expectations for pupils, staff, governors, volunteers and parents regarding the use of social media and supports the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## Related Guidance and School Policies

This policy outlines the schools approach to social media but is not exhaustive in its scope and should be used in conjunction with the following policies, statutory guidance and advice:

**Policies**:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Filtering & Monitoring Policy*
- *Artificial Intelligence Policy*
- *Behaviour & Sanction Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- Relationships & Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- *Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHEE) Policy*
- *Early Years Framework*
- *Crisis Management Policy*
- *Complaints & Concerns Policy*
- *Digital Technology & Acceptable Use Policy*
- *Staff Digital Acceptable Use Policy*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Low Level Concerns Policy*
- *Whistleblowing Policy*
- *Peripatetic Teacher Policy*
- *Prevent(Extremism & Radicalisation) Policy*
- *Safer Recruitment Policy*

**Statutory & Regulatory Guidance:**

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Communications Act 2003
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools — April 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Data Protection in Schools — July 2026
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools — January 2023
- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and Defamation Act 2013**
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003, s.15A — sexual communication with a child**
- **Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: Advice for Education Settings — UKCIS, March 2024**
- **Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings — February 2022**

## Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all members of the School community, including:

- Pupils.

- Staff.
- Governors.
- Volunteers.
- Parents and carers.
- Contractors working on behalf of the School where appropriate.

The policy applies to:

- Personal social media use, when this use causes harm to or brings the school or a member of its community into disrepute.
- Professional social media use on accounts held by the school as part of its official communication and marketing channels.
- Social networking platforms, messaging applications, video-sharing platforms, online community forums and discussion groups including any digital platform used to create, publish, share or discuss content.

The policy applies both during and outside School hours where social media activity impacts the welfare of pupils, the reputation of the School or the professional responsibilities of staff.

## Principles of Social Media Use

The School encourages responsible, respectful and safe engagement with social media. All members of the School community are expected to consider the potential impact of their online activity on themselves and others.

Social media use should:

- Demonstrate respect for others.
- Protect personal privacy and data.
- Support safeguarding and wellbeing.
- Reflect the values and ethos of the School.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
- Avoid behaviour that could damage the reputation of individuals or the School.

The School recognises that online behaviour can have real-world consequences and expects high standards of conduct in both digital and face-to-face environments.

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## Pupils' Personal Use of Social Media

The School recognises that many pupils use social media and online communication platforms as part of their daily lives. The School's role is to educate and support pupils in using these technologies safely and responsibly.

Pupils are encouraged to use social media responsibly and to understand the risks associated with online communication, including privacy concerns, contact from strangers, harmful content and inappropriate sharing of information.

Pupils should not use social media to:

- Bully, harass or intimidate others.
- Share offensive, discriminatory or abusive content.
- Publish material that threatens the wellbeing of another person.
- Share confidential information about the School community.
- Distribute inappropriate images or messages.
- Engage in behaviour that may bring the School into disrepute.

Where off-site social media activity affects the wellbeing, safety or education of pupils or the operation of the School, the matter may be addressed through the School's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and safeguarding procedures.

## Online Safety Education

The School believes that education is the most effective means of helping young people navigate the online world safely and responsibly. Pupils receive age-appropriate education through the curriculum, assemblies, pastoral programmes and online safety initiatives.

Teaching may include:

- Privacy and security settings.
- Digital footprints and online reputation.
- Responsible social media use.
- Safe online communication.
- Contact from strangers.
- Online exploitation and grooming.
- Cyberbullying.
- Harmful online content including the generation and sharing of deepfakes
- Oversharing of personal information.

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- Image sharing and consent.
- Critical evaluation of online information.

The School's online safety curriculum is regularly reviewed to reflect emerging technologies, changing risks and developments in legislation.

## Reporting Concerns

Pupils are encouraged to seek support whenever they encounter inappropriate, harmful or concerning online behaviour.

Pupils should report:

- Cyberbullying.
- Harmful content.
- Online harassment.
- Contact from strangers.
- Suspected grooming.
- Extremist content.
- Content promoting self-harm or other harmful behaviours.
- Any activity that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Reports may be made to teachers, tutors, pastoral staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or any trusted adult within the School. The School will respond to concerns promptly and proportionately.

## Staff Use of Personal Social Media

Staff are entitled to a private life and personal social media presence. However, employees must ensure that personal social media activity does not compromise professional standards, safeguarding responsibilities or public confidence in the School.

Staff should maintain clear professional boundaries at all times.

Staff must not:

- Accept pupils as friends or followers on personal accounts.
- Initiate or maintain personal social media relationships with pupils.
- Communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts.
- Use personal messaging applications to communicate with pupils
- Publish images of pupils from School activities on personal accounts.
- Share confidential School information online.

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Staff are strongly advised to maintain robust privacy settings and to consider carefully how public content may be viewed by pupils, parents, colleagues and the wider community. Where messaging platforms are used to communicate during school educational visits and offsite activities this may only be done via the schools designated trip phones, with the numbers given to students in case of emergency.

## Professional Conduct and Reputation

Staff should recognise that information published online may remain accessible indefinitely and may affect professional reputation.

In line with the teaching standards staff should avoid posting content that:

- Could undermine confidence in their professional judgement.
- Is offensive, discriminatory or inflammatory.
- Is inconsistent with School values.
- Risks bringing the School into disrepute.
- May harm relationships within the School community.

The standards required of staff online are consistent with those expected in the workplace and within the Staff Code of Conduct. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

## Official School Social Media Accounts

The School uses social media to communicate positively with pupils, parents, staff, alumni and the wider community. Official School accounts must be managed professionally and in accordance with School policies.

Only authorised personnel may publish content through official School accounts.

Authorised users may include:

- The Head.
- Marketing and communications personnel.
- Designated staff specifically authorised by the Forfar Head of Marketing.

The School maintains oversight of all official social media activity to ensure consistency, professionalism and compliance.

## Content Approval and Publication

Content published on official School social media platforms must be appropriate, accurate and consistent with School values.

Content should comply with:

- Safeguarding requirements.
- Data protection legislation.
- Photography and image consent arrangements.
- School branding requirements.
- Political impartiality requirements.
- Copyright and intellectual property requirements.

Content must present pupils respectfully and positively while protecting privacy and wellbeing.

## Photography and Images on Social Media

Photographs and videos of pupils will only be published where appropriate consent arrangements are in place and publication is consistent with safeguarding requirements.

When publishing images:

- The School will follow parental consent arrangements.
- Consideration will be given to safeguarding restrictions.
- Full names will normally be avoided alongside images.
- Personal information will not be disclosed unnecessarily.
- Images will be selected carefully to protect privacy and dignity.

The School's Photography and Use of Images Policy should be read alongside this policy.

## Data Protection and Privacy

The School is committed to protecting personal information and ensuring that social media activity is consistent with data protection legislation.

When using social media, the School will:

- Apply privacy-by-design principles.
- Limit the publication of personal information.
- Protect sensitive data.
- Ensure information is processed lawfully and fairly.
- Consider safeguarding implications before publication.

All official social media activity must comply with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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## Parents and Social Media

The School values positive relationships with parents and recognises the important role that social media can play in community engagement and communication.

Parents are expected to engage respectfully online and contribute positively to the School community.

Parents should not:

- Publish defamatory, abusive or malicious content about pupils, parents, staff or the School. Where parents have concerns or complaints they may raise these through processes outlined in the concerns and complaints policy.
- Use social media as an alternative to appropriate complaint procedures.
- Share confidential School information such as agreements between individual families and the school.
- Post images of other children without appropriate consent.

Parents with concerns about School matters are encouraged to use established communication and complaints procedures so that issues can be addressed constructively and effectively.

## Photography by Parents

The School understands that parents may wish to take photographs during School performances, sporting events and celebrations.

Parents are asked to respect the privacy and safety of all pupils.

Parents should:

- Use photographs for personal and family purposes only.
- Avoid publishing images of other children's without explicit and appropriate permission.
- Respect School guidance relating to photography and safeguarding.

The School may place restrictions on photography at certain events where safeguarding considerations require additional protection.

## Reputation Management

The School monitors its online presence and seeks to protect the reputation of pupils, staff and the wider School community.

Where serious misuse of social media occurs, the School may:

- Engage directly with the individuals involved.
- Request removal of harmful content.
- Implement disciplinary procedures where appropriate.

- Seek advice from external agencies.
- Consider legal action as a last resort in cases involving significant reputational damage, harassment, defamation or unlawful activity.

The School's primary objective is always to secure a constructive resolution wherever possible.

## Social Media and Safeguarding

The School recognises that social media can be associated with significant safeguarding risks.

Potential concerns may include:

- Grooming and exploitation.
- Radicalisation.
- Harmful online communities.
- Cyberbullying.
- Sextortion and image-based abuse.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Coercive or controlling behaviour.
- Mental health concerns.

Any safeguarding concern identified through social media activity must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

## Training and Awareness

The School provides training, guidance and support regarding appropriate social media use.

Training may include:

- Professional conduct online.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Online safety risks.
- Data protection requirements.
- Cybersecurity awareness.
- Reputation management.
- Emerging technologies and trends.

Pupils receive education regarding safe and responsible social media use through the curriculum and wider pastoral programme.

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## Monitoring and Review

The School will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and review arrangements regularly to ensure that practice remains current, effective and consistent with legal and safeguarding requirements.

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance.
- Following significant incidents.
- Following safeguarding reviews or audits.
- Whenever developments in technology or social media require revision.

Through responsible and informed use of social media, **Park School** seeks to protect its community, promote positive digital citizenship and ensure that technology is used in a safe, respectful and constructive manner.

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