Social Media Policy

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Woodland Rise School

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ZL & JH

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Statement of intent

Woodland Rise School understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

We are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents, and pupils in support of the school's mission, values, and objectives.
- Protecting our pupils from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Providing online safety information, advice, and training for parents.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) 'Data protection in schools'
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Pupils
- Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff
- Data Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Staff Handbook/Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Disciplinary Policy

Social Media broadly includes any of the following public social media platforms and messaging

Social networking	WhatsApp
Messaging platforms	Snapchat
Forums	Signal
Blogs	Discord
Video-sharing sites	Telegram
	Facebook Messenger

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Proprietary Body will be responsible for working with the Heads of Centre to ensure:

- This policy is implemented by the school.
- This policy is reviewed every two years.
- The DSL's remit covers online safety.
- All staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction.
- That this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including against any of the protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The Heads of Centre will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents, and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
- In conjunction with the Proprietary Body, handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the school's Complaints Policy.
- Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.
- Taking steps to minimise the amount of misplaced or malicious allegations in relation to social media use.
- Working alongside the DPO and ICT technicians (Du Feu) to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR and other data protection legislation.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- The school's approach to online safety.
- Dealing with concerns about social media use that are safeguarding concerns.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff.
- Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- Reporting any social media misuse by staff, pupils, or parents to the Heads of Centre immediately.
- Attending training on social media provided by the school such as: Professional boundaries, Safe use of social media, Online safeguarding risks, Reporting concerns.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home.
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both them and their children.
- Attending meetings or training provided by the school regarding social media use wherever possible.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Device and Technology Appropriate Use agreement.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online.
- Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced on social media.
- Reporting incidents and concerns relating to social media in line with the procedures within this policy.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.

The marketing officer/ Heads of Centre will be responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing all school-run social media accounts.
- Vetting and approving individuals who wish to be 'friends' or 'followers' on the school's social media platforms.
- Consulting with staff on the purpose of the social media account and the content published.
- Maintaining a log of inappropriate comments or abuse relating to the school.
- Managing inappropriate comments or abuse posted on the school's social media accounts, or regarding the school.
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up-to-date and relevant.

ICT support from the company Du Feu will be responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the school's social media accounts.
- Implementing appropriate security measures
- Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.

3. School social media accounts

Social media accounts for the school will only be created by the marketing officer and other designated staff members, following approval from the Heads of Centre. A school-based social media account will be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members and will be linked to an official school email account.

When setting up a school social media account, consideration will be given to the following:

- The purpose of the account
- Whether the overall investment will achieve the aim of the account
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether pupils, staff, parents, or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account.
- How much time and effort staff members are willing to commit to the account.
- How the success of the account will be evaluated

The Heads of Centre will be responsible for authorising members of staff and any other individual to have admin access to school social media accounts. Only people authorised by the Heads of Centre will be allowed to post on the school's accounts.

Passwords for the school's social media accounts are stored securely and only shared with people authorised by the Heads of Centre.

The school uses the following security measures: Multi-factor authentication (MFA), shared account management, Password changes after staff departures, Recovery email management

All posts made on school social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.

The school's social media accounts will comply with the platform's rules. The marketing officer/Heads of Centre will ensure anyone with authorisation to post on the school's social media accounts are provided with training on the platform and the rules around what can be posted.

School social media accounts will be moderated by the marketing officer/ Heads of Centre.

Staff conduct

Only staff with authorisation from the Heads of Centre will post on school accounts.

Staff will get content approved by the marketing officer before it is posted. Staff will only post content that meets the school's social media objectives, including the following:

- Reminders about upcoming events
- Good news regarding the school's performance, attainment, or reputation
- Good news regarding the achievements of staff and pupils
- Information that parents should be aware of, e.g. school closure.

Staff will ensure that their posts meet the following criteria:

- The post does not risk bringing the school into disrepute.
- The post only expresses neutral opinions and does not include any personal views.
- The post uses appropriate and school-friendly language.
- The post is sensitive towards those who will read it and uses particularly neutral and sensitive language when discussing something that may be controversial to some.
- The post does not contain any wording or content that could be construed as offensive.
- The post does not take a side in any political debate or express political opinions.
- The post does not contain any illegal or unlawful content.

4. Staff use of personal social media

Staff will not be prohibited from having personal social media accounts; however, it is important that staff protect their professional reputation by ensuring they use personal social media accounts in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be required to adhere to the following guidelines when using personal social media accounts:

- Staff members will not access personal social media platforms during school hours.
- Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts.
- Staff will not 'friend,' 'follow' or otherwise contact pupils through their personal social media accounts. If pupils attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member, they will report this to the Heads of Centre.
- Staff will be strongly advised to not 'friend' or 'follow' parents on their personal accounts.
- Staff members will ensure the necessary privacy controls are applied to personal accounts and will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of the school on their personal social media accounts.
- Staff will ensure views posted on personal accounts are personal and are not those of the school.
- Staff will not post any content online that is damaging to the school, its staff, or pupils.
- Staff members will not post any information which could identify a pupil, class, or the school – this includes any images, videos, and personal information.
- Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Staff will not post comments about the school, pupils, parents, staff, or other members of the school community.

Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action, or dismissal. Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community via social media by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

5. Pupil social media use

Pupils will not access social media during lesson time unless it is part of a curriculum activity. Pupils will not be permitted to use the school's Wi-Fi network to access any social media platforms unless prior permission has been sought from the Heads of Centre, and an ICT technician has ensured appropriate network security measures are applied.

Pupils will not attempt to 'friend,' 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Where a pupil attempts to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the Heads of Centre.

Pupils will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils. Pupils will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Pupils are instructed not to sign up to any social media platforms that have an age restriction above the pupil's age.

If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, this will be reported to a member of staff.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously and managed in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Training for all pupils, staff and parents will be refreshed considering any significant incidents or changes.

6. Cyberbullying

The school recognises that cyberbullying is a form of bullying that may take place through social media, messaging services, online gaming platforms, websites, email, or other digital technologies. Cyberbullying can include, but is not limited to:

- Sending threatening, abusive or offensive messages.
- Posting or sharing embarrassing, harmful or inappropriate images, videos, or comments.
- Excluding individuals from online groups or activities.
- Impersonating another person online.
- Sharing personal information without consent.
- Encouraging others to target, harass or intimidate an individual online.

The school will take all incidents of cyberbullying seriously and respond in line with the Anti-Bullying Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Cyberbullying incidents that occur outside of school may be addressed where they have an impact on the wellbeing, safety or education of members of the school community

7. Parent/ carer social media use

Parents/carers are expected to engage respectfully online and should not post comments, photographs or videos that may identify other pupils without consent. Concerns regarding the school should be raised through the Complaints Policy rather than via social media platforms.

The school will not tolerate the use of social media to make malicious, defamatory or deliberately false allegations against pupils, staff, parents/carers or members of the wider school community. Such behaviour may result in disciplinary action, restrictions on communication with the school, or referral to external agencies where appropriate

8. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Heads of Centre and proprietary body.
Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils, and parents/carers.