Gladesmore Community School

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

[HS7.2b]

Last updated : August 23		Next review : 2 years	
Governing Body :			
Status : Guidance	Index : Health and Safety		Website : N

Gladesmore Community School: Policy on Social Media

The school recognises and embraces the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media offers. While pupils may engage, collaborate and innovate through social media, they should also be aware that there are some associated risks, especially around issues of safeguarding, bullying and reputation.

Purpose of the policy:

- To encourage safe and appropriate use by pupils.
- To inform pupils and families of the age restrictions for different platforms.
- To reduce incidents of on-line exploitation.
- To reduce incidents of on-line bullying.

Definition of social media & age restrictions:

- Social media is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. It allows people to share information, ideas and views.
- The table at the end of this document lists some of the popular platforms used in the UK. Please note that there are a vast range of platforms available for young people in the UK. Aspects such as the age restrictions and functionality are changing rapidly.

Potential risks can include, but are not limited to:

- online bullying;
- grooming, exploitation or stalking;
- exposure to inappropriate material or hateful language;
- encouraging violent behaviour, self-harm or risk taking.

Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

Pupils should be aware that content uploaded to social media is not private. Even if you restrict it to 'friends', there is still capacity for it to be re-posted or distributed beyond the intended recipients. Therefore, pupils using social media should only create accounts appropriate to their age and conduct themselves in a respectful manner.

Pupils should:

- Be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, teachers and other pupils.
- Be responsible for their words and actions in an online environment. They are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, photograph or video that they are about to post on a social networking site is something that they want parents, teachers and other pupils to read. If in doubt, don't post it!
- Be aware that use of social media in school may result in disciplinary action.

Pupils should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

- is confidential to families, school and themselves;
- amounts to bullying;
- amounts to unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
- contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or video clips;
- is defamatory or knowingly false;
- breaches copyright;
- is in any other way unlawful.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

- Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the lead safeguarding officer in the school by you or your child.
- Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child.
- You should report any harassment or abuse received online.

Reporting, responding and recording cyberbullying incidents

- Pupils should never engage with cyberbullying incidents.
- If a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate or inflammatory material or images is discovered, you or your child should immediately report this to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Head of Year.

Breaches of this policy

Pupils suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be investigated in accordance with the school's bullying or disciplinary procedure. The pupil will be expected to co-operate with the school's investigation which may involve:

- handing over relevant passwords and login details;
- printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content.

The seriousness of the breach will be considered including:

- the nature of the content;
- how long the content remained visible on the social media site;
- the potential for recirculation by others.

Where conduct is considered to be unlawful, the school will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.

School is responsible for:

- Addressing any concerns and/or questions pupils and families may have on the use of social media.
- Operating within the boundaries of this policy and ensuring that all pupils understand the standards of behaviour expected of them.
- Giving specialist advice on the use of social media.
- Implementing and reviewing this policy.

Legislation

Acceptable use of social networking must comply with UK law. In applying this policy, the school will adhere to its rights, responsibilities and duties in accordance with the following:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013

The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, pupils should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and others, whether for school-related or personal use; whether during school hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using school equipment or using personal devices.

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Popular Social Media Platforms

Online Platform	Minimum age to have an account	Function/ Purpose
Discord	13	Discord is a voice, video, and text chat app that's used by tens of millions of people ages 13+ to talk and hang out with their communities and friends.
Facebook	13	Facebook is a platform that allows users, who sign-up for free profiles, to connect with friends, work colleagues or people they don't know, online. It allows users to share pictures, music, videos, and articles, as well as their own thoughts and opinions with however many people they like.
Instagram	13	Instagram is a photo sharing app which allows users to assign filters to photos and share them with followers. Instagramers can sync their photo sharing to other social networks, so Instagram photos can be posted directly to Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Flickr, and Foursquare
LinkedIn	13	LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the internet. You can use LinkedIn to find the right job or internship, connect and strengthen professional relationships, and learn the skills you need to succeed in your career.
Reddit	13	Reddit is a social news platform that covers a variety of topics posted by its users. Registered members of the website can share content like links, images, and texts and can interact with other users regarding the post.
Snapchat	13	Snapchat is a popular messaging app that lets users exchange pictures and videos (called snaps) that are meant to disappear after they're viewed.
TikTok	13	TikTok is a social media platform that is used to make a variety of short-form videos, from genres like dance, comedy, and education, that have a duration from 15 seconds to one minute.
Twitter	13	Twitter is a platform that allows you to send and receive short messages called tweets. Twitter users follow other users. If you follow someone you can see their tweets in your twitter 'timeline'.
WhatsApp	16	WhatsApp is a platform that lets you make video and voice calls, send text messages, and more.
YouTube	13	YouTube is a video sharing platform that allows users to watch videos posted by other users and upload videos of their own.