

Social media Policy

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Introduction

At Church Stretton School, the governors and staff fully recognise the contribution the school makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that the safety and protection of all students is of paramount importance and that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm.

We believe that the school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes all students' social, physical, emotional and moral development

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

We are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media.
- Protecting our students and staff from the dangers of social media including online sexual harassment.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

1.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy and procedures of Church Stretton School.

1.2 The Governing Body has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity / national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

1.3 The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.

1.4 The Assistant Head Teacher with the support of the Heads of Key Stage will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures of Church Stretton School.

1.5 Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Social Media Policy and for ensuring students do so also. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.

1.6 Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child / children at home.

1.7 Parents and carers will be expected to promote safe social media behaviour.

2. Definitions

2.1 Church Stretton School defines "social media" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including but not limited to:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums

- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook/Instagram
- Media sharing services
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, such as Twitter
- Snapchat
- Messenger
- Mobile TV applications

2.2 Church Stretton School defines “cyber bullying” as any use of social media or communication technology to bully an individual or group.

2.3 Church Stretton School defines “members of the school community” as any teacher, member of support staff, student, parent / carer of student, governor or ex-student.

3. Training of Staff

3.1 Teachers and support staff will be directed to read and understand the Social Media Policy as part of their new starter induction.

3.2 Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

4. Student Expectations

4.1 Students are responsible for following the school rules and will be expected to follow requests from teachers, in line with the school Behaviour Policy.

4.2 Students are not to have phones/smart watches out during the school day and in doing so will be sanctioned in line with the school Behaviour Policy.

5. Social Media Use – Staff

5.1 Church Stretton School understands that there are a variety of uses for social media. However, staff using social media do so at their own risk.

- 5.2 School social media passwords must never be shared.
- 5.3 The IT Support team is responsible for the school's social media accounts.
- 5.4 Teachers must not access social media during lesson time.
- 5.5 Members of staff must not "friend" or otherwise contact students or parents /carers through social media. Including but not exclusive to those who have left Church Stretton School in the last two years and are under the age of 18.
- 5.6 It is recommended that members of staff should not "friend" ex-students, parents/carers unless there is a need for communication in a capacity other than teacher/student e.g. sports club/hobby etc.
- 5.7 If students attempt to "friend" or otherwise contact members of staff through social media, the request should be ignored and it should be reported to the Assistant Head/Head of Key Stage.
- 5.8 Members of staff should not to identify themselves as an employee of Church Stretton School on social media.
- 5.9 Members of staff must not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or students.
- 5.10 Where teachers or members of staff use social media in a personal capacity, they should make it clear that their views are personal.
- 5.11 Teachers or members of staff must not post any information which could identify a student, class or the school unless using the official school accounts.
- 5.12 Members of staff should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- 5.13 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.
- 5.14 Members of staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings Church Stretton School into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.
- 5.15 Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community by teachers and members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.
- 5.16 If a member of staff is granted leave from school it is advised that they should not post on Social Media during the working week.

6. Social Media Use – Students and Parents /Carers

6.1 Students may not access social media whilst in school.

6.2 Breaches of this policy by students will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to police prosecution, or exclusion.

6.3 Students and parents / carers must not attempt to “friend”/”follow” or otherwise contact members of staff through social media. If attempts to contact members of staff through social media are made, they can be reported to the Assistant Head Teacher. The only exception to do so is if the parent / carer has a connection with a member of staff outside of school where contact is required e.g. relative, member of a club/society.

6.4 If members of staff attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact students or parents/carers through social media, they can be reported to the Head Teacher.

6.5 Students and parents / carers should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

6.6 Students and parents must not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or students.

6.7 Students at Church Stretton School are advised not to sign up to social media sites that have an age restriction above the student’s age.

6.8 If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it must be reported to the Assistant Head Teacher.

6.9 Any malicious use of social media against other student/s or staff may be passed on to the police for investigation.

7. Blocked Content

7.1 The majority of social media websites are blocked by the network’s firewalls.

7.2 Attempts to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment.

7.3 Inappropriate content which is accessed on the school computers should be reported to the Assistant Head Teacher so that the site can be blocked.

7.4 The final decision of whether access should be granted to a site will be made by the Head Teacher.

8. Cyber Bullying

8.1 At Church Stretton School, cyber bullying is taken seriously.

8.2 Incidents of cyber bullying will be dealt with and reported along the same chain as the Anti-Bullying Policy, including being passed on to the police.

8.3 As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of PSHE.

9. Online Sexual harassment

9.1 We do not condone sexual harassment of our students or by our students including online harassment. If instances occur, they will be investigated in line with our behaviour policy, and we reserve the right to involve the police if required.

10. Links with other policies

This Social Media Policy is linked to:

- Behaviour policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Safeguarding policy

11. Addressing Social Media issues (diagram used by school staff)

