



ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

**SOCIAL MEDIA, USE OF PHONES AND DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
POLICY**

Date of Approval	15.07.2024
Date of Next Review	15.07.2026
Review led by	
Approved by	FGB
This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents	Child Protection Policy Positive Behaviour Policy Whistleblowing Policy Discipline Policy Home-school agreement Low-level concern policy
Notes	Two Yearly Review
Updated on the school website	July 2024



School Mission Statement

**Our Mission statement demonstrates our commitment to inclusion at English Martyrs school:
To accept each individual as they are and to enable them to develop their full potential within a
Christ-centred, worshipping community in a spirit of love, happiness and understanding**

‘A Learning Community in Christ’

Introduction:

As a Catholic school, English Martyrs has an agreed Mission Statement and a distinctive nature. Christ's mission to humanity was conducted in a spirit of love and understanding, and our social media policy aims to ensure that the same spirit is reflected in our school community through mutual respect for all.

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that these sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This document gives clarity to the way in which social media/mobile phones are to be used by pupils, governors, visitors, parent helpers and school staff. It also provides guidance for parents.

There are five key areas to consider:

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

C. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education
D. Comments posted by parents/carers

E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying

This policy also addresses:

- Use of phones by children
- Digital photography
- GDPR Procedures
- Inappropriate use of social networking sites
- Policy review

A. The use of social networking sites by pupils within school

It is generally the case that children under the age of 13 are not permitted to be registered on social networking sites including Facebook. Therefore, children at our school will not be allowed to use or access social networking sites at any time whilst at school. If staff become aware that children are using social media sites inappropriately outside of school, parents will be alerted in the interests of safeguarding.

B. Use of social networking by staff in a personal capacity

It is likely that a high proportion of staff will have their own social networking site accounts. It is important for them **to protect their professional reputation** by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

Guidelines are issued to staff:

- Staff must never add pupils as friends into their personal accounts (including past pupils under the age of **18**).
- **Staff** must not post pictures of school events without the Headteacher's consent.
- Staff must not use social networking sites within the working day (unless during break times, and this should not be with the children present).

- Staff should only use social networking in a way that does not conflict with the current Staff Code of Conduct and / or the National Teacher's Standards.
- Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
- Staff must not post comments about the school, pupils, parents or colleagues including members of the Governing Body.¹
- Staff should read and comply with 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People'.
- Inappropriate use by staff should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance. The Headteacher will deal with this in accordance with the disciplinary policy.

C. Creation of network accounts by staff for use in education.

All social media services must be approved by the Headteacher in advance of any educational work being undertaken.

An exception to these guidelines is when staff are posting on the school Facebook site or Instagram site within their professional capacity.

D. Comments posted by parents/carers

Parents and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion. School policies and documents, such as the Home School Agreement, the Complaints Policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion.

Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.

- Parents must not post pictures of pupils (other than their own) on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at school or at a school event.
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community.

In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the Governing Body, when made aware of the issue, will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and encourage them to seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the Complaints Policy.

The Governing Body understands that, "There are circumstances in which police involvement is appropriate. These include where postings have a racist element or where violence is threatened or encouraged."

¹ An exception to these guidelines is when staff are posting on school media sites, such as Facebook or Instagram, for the purposes of communicating with parents and promoting the school. These can be undertaken during the school day. All comments made about the school will be positive and in line with the Staff Code of Conduct. Photos of the children will be posted only where parents have given consent.

Furthermore, laws relating to defamation and privacy still apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written which:

- expose (*an individual*) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- cause (*an individual*) to be shunned or avoided
- lower (*an individual's*) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society; or
- disparage (*an individual in their*) business, trade, office or profession.

(National Association of Headteachers)

E. Dealing with incidents of online bullying/inappropriate use of social networking sites

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy sets out the processes and sanctions regarding any type of bullying by a child on the school roll. The school can take action relating to incidents that happen outside school if these:

- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school or
- Pose a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Use of social networking sites to harass, bully or intimidate are covered irrespective of when/where the post was made.

Use of Phones by Children

Children are not permitted to use their mobile phones at any time whilst on the school site or on a school trip. When a child brings a mobile phone to school it must be handed to their class teacher and phones will be stored away from pupil access until the end of the school day.

Digital Photography

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records.

Staff, visitors, volunteers and pupils are not permitted to use their own camera or mobile phone to take any images, or record any videos, of children in our school for their own records during the school day. A school mobile phone has been purchased that can be used to take photographs or videos on for easier editing and uploading to social media. Photos from this phone will then be transferred to the school system and deleted from the phone.

GDPR Procedures

In line with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

- Under the Data Protection Act of 2018 schools must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders. Photographs will be stored on the school network which is password protected until the school ceases to operate. Should this occur then all photographs will be shredded or deleted from the school network.
- The school's digital cameras (including iPads) must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit).

- Photographs saved on the school system and are then removed from the device's memory. Any photographs printed should remain in school, unless they are being used with parental consent for the purposes of publicity and communication, such as the school notice boards within the parish churches.
- Photographs of children may be taken and used in accordance with parental consent obtained via the Consent for Use of Images form.
- Events to which parents and carers are invited, such as sports day, productions, liturgies, outings, the school Christmas play and fundraising events, may be recorded by video and photographed by staff and parent/carers but always in full view of all attending.
- Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites.

Visitors may only use their phones outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.

- The use of cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets.
- All school cameras and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.

Inappropriate Use of Social Networking Sites

If the Governing Body are aware that parents have made comments that are untrue, misleading or intimidating in relation to the school / members of the school community, they will address this. A template letter is given below:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.....

It has come to the attention of the Governing Body that comments that are untrue / misleading / intimidating regarding the school/members of the school community have been made on a social networking site. As these comments do not comply with the expectations set out in the school's Social Media Policy and Home School Agreement (enclosed), you are respectfully asked to remove them from the website. We would encourage you to enter into productive communication with the school in order to resolve any outstanding differences. The school has an 'open door' policy with regard to dealing with parental communication and there are also policies in place such as the Complaints Policy if required.

Yours sincerely,

Chair of Governing Body

The Governing Body will also seek legal advice from West Sussex County Council's legal team, if needed, in identifying the best way to deal with specific situations or parents who repeatedly post inappropriate comments. They may instead choose to use the template letters that the legal team provide.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis or more frequently if need arises.