Social Media Policy

Approved by:	Abel Roche	Date: April 2025
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Contents

1. Purpose and scope

This policy aims to:

> Set guidelines and rules on the use of school's social media channels

> Establish clear expectations for the way members of the school community engage with each other online

> Support the school's policies on data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, students and parents/carers are required to read, understand and comply with this social media policy.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or otherwise.

It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using:

> School IT facilities and equipment

> Equipment belonging to members of staff and pupils

> Any other IT/Internet-enabled equipment

All members of the school should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, harassment, child protection, safer recruitment, and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

1.1 Definition of social media

For the purposes of this document, 'social media' is considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information (including photos and video). This includes group messaging services such as WhatsApp.

2. Use of official school social media

The school's official social media channels are as follows:

Facebook, Instagram

These accounts are managed by the Headteacher. Staff members who have not been authorised to manage or post to the account, must not access or attempt to access these accounts.

If you have suggestions for something you'd like to appear on our school social media channel(s), please speak to the Headteacher.

2.1 Facebook

The school will post on Facebook:

> Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)

> Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)

- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on Facebook:

- Names of individuals
- Photos of individuals without given consent
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

2.2 X (formerly Twitter)

The school currently does not use an X account.

2.3 Moderation

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will delete as soon as reasonably possible:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments and also any protected characteristics (2010 act)
- Comments we consider to be spam
- Personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.
- Posts that advertise commercial activity or ask for donations

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, following the school's complaints policy. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, they will be blocked.

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will also ensure that all content shared on social media platforms is age appropriate for the school community.

2.4 Following other social media users

The school:

- Will only 'like' Facebook pages with a non-commercial interest – being 'liked' by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind

> May follow other users if you follow us on X (formerly Twitter) – being followed by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind

3. Personal use of social media by staff

The school expects all staff (including governors and volunteers) to consider the safety of pupils and the risks (reputational and financial) to the school when using social media channels, including when doing so in a personal capacity. Staff are also responsible for checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts.

Staff members will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff **must not**:

> Use personal accounts to conduct school business

> Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present

> Complain about the school, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers

> Reference or share information about individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers

> Post images of pupils

> Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school

> Link their social media profile to their work email account

> Use personal social media during timetabled teaching time except in a professional capacity.

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the staff behavior policy.

Any communication received from current pupils (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

Staff should not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via official school channels).

4. Personal use of social media by pupils

The school encourages pupils to

> Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times

> Be respectful to other pupils and parents/carers

> Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Pupils **should not** use social media to:

> Complain about individual members of staff

> Complain about the school

> Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other pupils or parents/carers

> Post images of other pupils without their permission

Any concerns about a pupil's social media use will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy.

5. Personal use of social media by parents/carers

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

> Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times

> Be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers and other pupils and children

> Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Parents/carers **should not** use social media to:

> Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils

> Complain about the school

> Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils

> Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents

> Post images of children other than their own

5.1 WhatsApp groups

We expect parents/carers to follow the above social media guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups.

6. Training and awareness

Training and awareness is continuous throughout the year. E-safety is embedded within the curriculum, and regular e-safety updates are included in our school newsletter and safeguarding newsletter.

7. Monitoring and review

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, for legitimate business purposes. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

The headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the school.

This policy will be reviewed every year

8. Related policies

> Child protection policy

> ICT and internet acceptable use policy

> Behaviour policy

> Staff behaviour policy

> Mobile phone use policy

> Photography and filming policy statement (see below)

9. Social Media – Control of images

Guideline on how to take photographs

- To avoid any sexual connotations and subsequent misuse, (ref samples provided by Lizzie Ionadi.)

Where and how images will be used

- School website
- Newsletters
- Advertising of school – e.g. Flyers, local newspapers etc.
- Social media e.g. School Facebook page

Image control

- All images taken are to be reviewed against guidelines and authorised by either DSL or DDSL
- Use to be controlled and authorised by the DSL
- Facebook admin to be the DSL or delegated to a DDSL
- All images taken are subject to GDPR regulations in regards of storage and use

Parental permission

- Signed parental permission is required before any images are taken of children. Where this permission has not been granted for a child, images cannot be taken
- Parental permission must be reviewed/resigned at the start of each school year

Appendix 1

NSPCC Guidance on taking photos

Photography and filming policy statement

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

The British School works with children and families as part of its activities.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- protect children and young people who take part in The British School's services, events and activities, specifically those where photographs and videos may be taken
- set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs/videos being taken of children and young people during our events and activities
- to ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using and sharing images of children and young people.

This policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers and other adults associated with The British School

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales. Summaries of key legislation and guidance is available on NSPCC Learning:

Online abuse legislation and guidance

Child protection legislation and guidance

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to take, share and use images of children safely.

We recognise that:

- sharing photographs and films of our activities can help us celebrate the successes and achievements of our children and young people, provide a record of our activities and raise awareness of our organisation
- the welfare of the children and young people taking part in our activities is paramount
- children, their parents and carers have a right to decide whether their images are taken and how these may be used, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- consent to take images of children is only meaningful when children, their parents and carers understand how the images will be used and stored, and are fully aware of the potential risks associated with the use and distribution of these images
- there are potential risks associated with sharing images of children online.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- always asking for written consent from a child and their parents or carers before taking and using a child's image
- always explaining what images will be used for, how they will be stored and what potential risks are associated with sharing images of children
- making it clear that if a child or their family withdraw consent for an image to be shared, it may not be possible to delete images that have already been shared or published
- changing the names of children whose images are being used in our published material whenever possible (and only using first names if we do need to identify them)
- never publishing personal information about individual children and disguising any identifying information (for example the name of their school or a school uniform with a logo)
- making sure children, their parents and carers understand how images of children will be securely stored and for how long (including how we will control access to the images and their associated information)
- reducing the risk of images being copied and used inappropriately by:
- only using images of children in appropriate clothing (including safety wear if necessary)
- avoiding full face and body shots of children taking part in activities such as swimming where there may be a heightened risk of images being misused
- using images that positively reflect young people's involvement in the activity.

We will also develop a procedure for reporting the abuse or misuse of images of children as part of our child protection procedures. We will ensure everyone involved in our organisation knows the procedures to follow to keep children safe.

Photography and/or filming for personal use

When children themselves, parents, carers or spectators are taking photographs or filming at our events and the images are for personal use, we will publish guidance about image sharing in the event programmes and/or announce details of our photography policy before the start of the event. This includes:

- reminding parents, carers and children that they need to give consent for [name of group/organisation] to take and use their images
- asking for photos taken during the event not to be shared on social media or asking people to gain permission from children, their parents and carers before sharing photographs and videos that include them
- recommending that people check the privacy settings of their social media account to understand who else will be able to view any images they share

- reminding children, parents and carers who they can talk to if they have any concerns about images being shared.

Photography and/or filming for [name of group/organisation]'s use

We recognise that our group leaders may use photography and filming as an aid in activities such as music or drama. However, this should only be done with The British Schools' permission and using our equipment.

Children, young people, parents and carers must also be made aware that photography and filming is part of the programme and give written consent.

If we hire a photographer for one of our events, we will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- providing the photographer with a clear brief about appropriate content and behaviour
- ensuring the photographer wears identification at all times
- informing children, their parents and carers that a photographer will be at the event and ensuring they give written consent to images which feature their child being taken and shared
- not allowing the photographer to have unsupervised access to children
- not allowing the photographer to carry out sessions outside the event or at a child's home
- reporting concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography following our child protection procedures.

Photography and/or filming for wider use

If people such as local journalists, professional photographers (not hired by The British School) or students wish to record one of our events and share the images professionally or in the wider world, they should seek permission in advance.

They should provide:

- the name and address of the person using the camera
- the names of children they wish to take images of (if possible)
- the reason for taking the images and/or what the images will be used for
- a signed declaration that the information provided is valid and that the images will only be used for the reasons given.

The British School will verify these details and decide whether to grant permission for photographs/films to be taken. We will seek consent from the children who are the intended subjects of the images and their parents and inform the photographer of anyone who does not give consent.

At the event we will inform children, parents and carers that an external photographer is present and ensure the photographer is easily identifiable, for example by issuing them with a coloured identification badge.

If The British School is concerned that someone unknown to us is using their sessions for photography or filming purposes, we will ask them to leave and (depending on the nature of the concerns) follow our child protection procedures.

If consent to take photographs is not given

If children, parents and/or carers do not consent to photographs being taken, we will respect their wishes. We will agree in advance how they would like to be identified so the photographer knows not to take pictures of them, and ensure this is done in a way that does not single out the child or make them feel isolated.

We will never exclude a child from an activity because we do not have consent to take their photograph.

Storing images

We will store photographs and videos of children securely, in accordance with our safeguarding policy and data protection law.

We will keep hard copies of images in a locked drawer and electronic images in a protected folder with restricted access.

We will never store images of children on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks and mobile phones.

The British School does not permit staff and volunteers to using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children. Only cameras or devices belonging to the The British School should be used.

[Organisations that store and use photographs to identify children and adults for official purposes, such as identity cards, should ensure they are complying with the legal requirements for handling personal information. Further guidance can be found from the **Information Commissioner's Office**].

Related policies and procedures

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- Code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Online safety policy and procedures for responding to concerns about online abuse.