



St Francis Xavier
Catholic Primary School

"Achieving excellence together with God's love"

Social Media Policy

Reviewed By:	SMT, Staff, Governing Body
Date Reviewed:	July 2019
Next Review Date:	July 2021

Introduction

This policy is intended to guide school employees who choose to identify themselves as such, whether in a personal or professional capacity, on their use of social media and complements the employee code of conduct and other whole school policies.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right and the school encourages its employees to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the school without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

Employees using social media in a personal capacity, but identifying themselves as school employees, are expected to behave appropriately and in ways that are consistent with the school's values and policies. As members of the school community, they should act in a manner which does not bring the school into disrepute.

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as logging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace or Bebu and posting materials, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have significant impact on an organisation's reputation or image.

In addition, St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect off all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

What is Social Media?

For the purpose of this policy, social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social networking websites such as Facebook, Bebo and Myspace are perhaps the most well-known examples of social media but the terms also covers other web based services such as blogs, video and audio podcasts, wikis, message boards, photo document and video sharing websites such as You Tube and micro blogging services such as Twitter. This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day.

For the purpose of this document the terminology Social Media is not exhaustive and also applies to the use of communication technologies such as mobile phones, cameras, PDAs/PSPs or other handheld devices and any other emerging forms of communications technologies.

Aims

- To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors and volunteers at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School with respect to social networking.
- To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

Key Principles

Staff and governors at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect. It is important to protect everyone at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with children via social networking.

This policy relates to social networking outside work. Blogging and accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted unless on behalf of the school and with permission of the Headteacher and governing body.

Code of Conduct for Staff, Governors and Volunteers at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School – Social Networking

The following are not considered acceptable at St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School:

- The use of the school's name, logo or any other published material without written prior permission from the Headteacher. This applies to any published material including internet or written documentation.
- The unauthorised posting of any images of employees, children, governors or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities.
- The postings of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the school. This includes defamatory comments.
- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.

- Staff should never 'friend' a pupil of the school onto their social networking site.
- Staff should never use or access social networking sites of pupils and should never accept an invitation to 'friend' a pupil.

In addition to the above, Staff, Governors and Volunteers must ensure that they:

- Do not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at/or connected with the school.
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security.

Safer Online Behaviour

- Managing personal information effectively makes it far less likely that information will be misused.
- In their own interests, staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for pupils or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.
- All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure the information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.
- Confidentiality needs to be considered at all times. Social networking sites have the potential to discuss inappropriate information and employees need to ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about themselves, their employer, their colleagues, pupils or members of the public.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Social Media Policy

In instances where there has been a breach of this policy, the following will apply:

- Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the

Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

- The governing body will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.