



Alexander Hosea Primary School

'Roots to grow, wings to fly'

Use of Social Media Policy – August 2023

Based on Integra, South Gloucestershire model policy

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

This policy has been screened to ensure that we give 'due consideration' to equality of opportunity and has been agreed and formally approved by the appropriate reviewing and ratification Committee.

Author	Integra at South Glos	Date reviewed	August 2023
Position	Reviewed by Tara-Lou Price	Date ratified	October 2023
Document status	Ratified	Next review date	Autumn 2027
EIA approved by	S&W	Reviewing committee	Staffing and Welfare

EIA = consideration of potential adverse impacts on the following groups: age; disability; gender and gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; racial groups; religion or belief; sexual orientation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Governing Body of the school is committed to ensuring that all school staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites. It recognises that the use of such sites has become a significant part of life for many people. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that school staff are aware of their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites, and how this may impact on their employment. The school's ICT policy and Code of Conduct also apply.
- 1.2. School staff are expected to maintain a professional distance from pupils, and therefore should not be involved in social networking with pupils either in or outside of school.
- 1.3. The Governing Body believes it important that school staff are able to use technology and related services effectively and flexibly, whilst recognising their value. However, this must be balanced with the Governing Body's duty to safeguard children, the wider community and the reputation of the school.

2. Scope

2.1. This Policy applies to all individuals engaged by the school in a paid or voluntary capacity, including parent helpers, governors, agency workers, peripatetic staff, and those on work experience placements (collectively referred to as 'staff' in this policy).

2.2. Staff are expected to comply with this policy at all times to safeguard and protect the privacy, confidentiality and interests of the school, pupils, Local Authority, and the wider school community.

2.3 Staff are expected to familiarise themselves with how individual social media applications work and be clear about the advantages and disadvantages.

3. Aims

3.1. The policy aims to:

- Enable school staff to use social networking sites safely and securely.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the risks associated with the inappropriate use of social networking sites.
- Safeguard school staff in connection with the use of social networking sites and to ensure they do not put themselves in a vulnerable position or jeopardise their professional reputation.
- Ensure that the school is not brought into disrepute.

4. Definition

4.1. For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes, but is not limited to, online social forums such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video/image sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.

4.2. There are many more examples of social media than those listed above, and this is a constantly changing area. Staff should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they may use.

5. Use of Social Networking Sites

5.1. All school staff should be aware when using social networking sites that anything said, shown or received could be made available to a wider audience than originally intended. Once something is online it can be copied and redistributed. Posts can be made by others but linked to you which could damage the reputation of either you or the school. They should follow and understand the following principles:

- Employees and individuals otherwise engaged by the school are not permitted to access social networking sites for personal use via school information systems or school equipment at any time.
- They must not accept pupils/students as 'friends' and must not approach pupils/students to become their friends on social networking sites. Personal communication of this nature could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional, and make that individual vulnerable to allegations.
- Any student initiated communication, or on-line friend requests must be declined and reported to the Headteacher or designated school child protection colleague immediately.
- Staff are advised not to be "on line friends" with ex or recent pupils of the school or other schools.

They should not share any personal information with any pupil; including personal contact details, personal website addresses or social networking site details.

- If staff are on line 'friends' with any parent/carers linked with the school, they must ensure that they do not disclose any information or otherwise post details which may bring themselves or the school into disrepute. Staff **must not** engage in any on-line discussion about any child attending the school.
- School staff must not disclose, on any social networking site, any information that is confidential to the school, Governing Body, or Local Authority; or post anything that could potentially bring the school, Governing Body or Local Authority into disrepute.
- They must not disclose any personal data or information about any individual/colleague/pupil, which could be in breach of the General Data Protection Regulations.
- Staff should not post photographs of pupils under any circumstances, and should not post photographs of colleagues or others in the school community without their express permission.
- Care should be taken to avoid using language which could be deemed as offensive to others.
- Staff are strongly advised to take steps to ensure their on-line personal data is not accessible to anybody they do not wish to access it. For example, they are advised to check the security and privacy settings of any social networking site they subscribe to and set these to maximum.
- Staff are strongly advised to ensure that their social media accounts are not linked, otherwise details from e.g. Facebook could appear on your LinkedIn account.
- If staff become aware of a posting on social media which is not in line with this policy they should discuss this in confidence with the Headteacher or their line manager.

5.2 While the school has its own Facebook page, this will be managed by the School Business Manager, and if needed with post approval from the Head Teacher, only photos of pupils will be used where consent has been received from parents/carers.

6. Breaches of the Policy

6.1. While the Governing Body does not discourage school staff from using social networking sites, staff should be aware that the Headteacher/Governing Body will take seriously any circumstances where such sites are used inappropriately, including any usage that is considered to be online bullying or harassment.

6.2. The Headteacher may exercise his/her right to monitor the use of the school's information systems, including internet access, where it is believed unauthorised use may be taking place. If such monitoring detects the unauthorised use of social networking sites, disciplinary action may be taken. This could be regarded as gross misconduct

6.3. If any instances or allegations of inappropriate use of social networking sites are brought to the attention of the Headteacher/Governing Body, disciplinary action may be taken.

Appendix A Class social media (eg Facebook) parent groups dos and don'ts

Agreed by Parent Council - May 2021

The purpose of our Class social media (eg Facebook/WhatsApp) group is to provide an online, mutually-supportive community for parents and carers of the students at Alexander Hosea Primary School. The group is not for students, and we ask that no content be posted by children. Staff do not have access to these groups and therefore social media is not a constructive or appropriate approach to managing concerns. All conduct on social media groups should be respectful, inclusive, supportive and in the best interests of other parents, children and their school staff and community.

Goal: Our goal is to share information and tips; provide mutual support; update the community on local events and programs, and showcase the achievements within the class or school community.

Community Dos:

- Highlight our community's accomplishments and supporters.
- Ask questions, respond and share information.
- Keep discussions positive and focused on our school community.
- Post information about education, our community and opportunities for students.
- Constructively raise issues for discussion, and share ideas for Parent Council or Friends of AHS activities or goals.
- Use language appropriate for a caring and respectful community.
- Post your photos of your children, if you wish.
- Respect other parents' wishes regarding pictures of their children. Not all parents may want their child's photo on social media. Any parent may request removal by Class social media (eg Facebook) Administrator(s) of photos featuring their children.
- Ensure that the group's privacy settings are so that social media users outside the group cannot see posts by group members. Remember that your posts are visible to all members of the group. The closed group is for parents of children at Alexander Hosea Primary only.

Community Don'ts:

- Do not engage in cyberbullying of any kind, including insulting, targeting, or excluding any individuals, including but not limited to Governors, school staff, Friends of AHS members, students, parents, or other individuals affiliated with or connected to the school.
- Do not put down individuals, the school or other local organisations.
- Do not discriminate in any way.
- Do not post concerns about staff, other parents or children. Concerns should be raised privately with school.
- Do not make any inflammatory statements or allegations against individuals, the school or organisations. Threats of physical or verbal abuse will be reported to the authorities, and the offender may be removed or blocked from the group.
- Do not post confidential information, such as student grades, disciplinary proceedings, health conditions, personal family matters, or anything else that would generally be considered personal or private.
- Do not advertise goods or services, though you may thank partners and contributors.
- Do not publish content as your own that has been created by others.
- Do not post pictures that other parents have taken without their express permission.

The Class Facebook Administrator(s) reserve the right to delete comments and remove or block users who do not follow the guidelines stated above. The determination of prohibited use or objectionable content is at the discretion of the Class social media (eg Facebook) Administrator(s).

