

# St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School



## Social Media Policy

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Approved: January 2025

Next Review Date: January 2027

## Key Details

**Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs):** Mr Mark Cooper, Miss Laura Spaven, Mrs Deana Jordan  
**Safeguarding Governor:** Mr Darren Plimley

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## 1. Policy Aims and Scope

- This policy has been written by St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School, involving staff, pupils, and parents/carers, building on best practice guidance from the Education People and other agencies, with specialist advice as required. It considers statutory guidance, including:
  - *DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024*
  - *'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018*
  - *'Behaviour in Schools Advice for Headteachers and School Staff' 2022*
  - *'Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School' 2022*
  - *Relevant local safeguarding procedures.*
- The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School community when using social media.
  - The school recognises that online safety is an essential part of safeguarding and acknowledges its duty to ensure that all pupils and staff are protected from potential harm when using social media.
  - As outlined in our child protection policy, the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) have overall responsibility for online safety.
- This policy applies to all use of social media, including but not limited to blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, and instant messaging apps or services.
- The policy applies to pupils, parents/carers, and all staff, including the governing body, leadership team, teachers, support staff, external contractors, visitors, volunteers, and other individuals who work for, or provide services on behalf of the school (collectively referred to as "staff" in this policy).

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## 2. Links with Other Policies

This policy links with several other policies, practices, and action plans, including:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs)
- Behaviour and discipline policy
- Child protection policy

- Code of conduct
  - Curriculum policies (e.g., Computing, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship, and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE))
  - Privacy notice
  - Freedom of information policy
  - Online safety policy
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### **3. General Social Media Expectations**

- St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School believes that everyone should be treated with kindness, respect, and dignity. Online behaviour must reflect the same standards expected offline. All members of the school community are expected to engage in social media positively and responsibly.
- All members of the school community are advised not to post or share content that may be considered threatening, hurtful, or defamatory on any social media platform.
- Pupil and staff access to social media will be managed while using school-provided devices or systems. The school uses a dedicated device for its social media activities, which is kept with the Headteacher.
- Inappropriate or excessive use of social media during school hours or on school devices may result in the removal of internet access and/or disciplinary action.
- The use of social media or apps will be risk-assessed by the DSL before use. Any use will align with our Acceptable Use Policy.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of the school community on social media will be taken seriously and managed in accordance with relevant policies, including anti-bullying, whistleblowing, behaviour, and child protection.

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### **4. Staff Use of Social Media**

#### **4.1 Reputation**

- All staff members are advised that their online conduct on social media can impact their role and reputation within the school. Civil, legal, or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession, institution or Catholic Church into disrepute.
- Staff are encouraged to safeguard their privacy on social media by:

- Setting appropriate privacy levels on personal accounts.
- Being cautious with location-sharing services.
- Using strong passwords and logging out of accounts after use.
- Avoiding the representation of personal views as those of the school.
- Staff are advised not to identify themselves as employees of St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School on personal social networking accounts to safeguard their privacy and prevent information from being linked with the school.
- All staff are expected to ensure that their social media use is professional, responsible, and in line with school policies and legal requirements.

#### 4.2 Communicating with Pupils and Their Families

- Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact pupils or their family members.
  - Staff are advised not to communicate with or add any current or past pupils or their family members as “friends” on personal social media accounts.
  - Any communication from pupils or parents/carers received on personal social media accounts must be reported to the DSL.
  - Pre-existing relationships or situations that make compliance difficult must be discussed with the DSL and Headteacher. Decisions and advice will be recorded.
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#### 5. Official Use of Social Media

- St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School’s official social media platform is **X (formerly known as Twitter)**.
- The official use of social media is for clear educational or community engagement objectives, with specific intended outcomes. Its use is risk-assessed and approved by the Headteacher.
- Official social media accounts are managed using school-provided email addresses and are linked via the school website.
- Leadership staff, including the Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers, have access to account credentials to ensure continuity in case of emergencies.
- Official social media use will align with all relevant policies, such as anti-bullying, image use, data protection, confidentiality, and child protection.
- Parents/carers and pupils will be informed of official social media use, and content will be made accessible through alternative channels where needed.
- Staff managing social media accounts must:
  - Read and follow the Acceptable Use Policy.
  - Act professionally and adhere to legal and safeguarding frameworks.

- Avoid private or direct messaging with pupils or their families.
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## **6. Pupils' Use of Social Media**

- Pupils are not permitted to use social media during school hours for personal purposes.
  - Safe and appropriate social media use is taught as part of a progressive safeguarding curriculum, using age-appropriate platforms and resources.
  - Pupils will be advised:
    - To carefully consider sharing personal details or information that may identify them or their location.
    - To use strong passwords and block/report unwanted communications.
    - Not to meet online contacts without parental permission and a trusted adult present.
  - Concerns about pupils' social media use, particularly underage use, will be addressed in line with safeguarding and behaviour policies. Parents will be informed as appropriate.
  - Inappropriate use of social media by pupils which brings the school into disrepute may result in the implementation of the behaviour policy.
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## **7. Policy Monitoring and Review**

- This policy will be reviewed annually and updated following any national or local guidance changes or identified concerns.
  - Internet use via school-provided devices will be regularly monitored to ensure compliance. Any issues identified will be incorporated into action planning.
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## **8. Responding to Policy Breaches**

- All members of the school community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing school procedures.
- Leadership staff will debrief and implement lessons learned after investigations are completed.
- Staff, parents, and pupils are expected to work together to resolve concerns respectfully and confidentially.
- If additional support is required, the DSL will seek advice from relevant safeguarding services or agencies.