Park Road Academy Primary School

Social Media Policy

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Statement of intent

Park Road Academy Primary School recognises that social media is an established part of the online world and can provide opportunities for communication, learning and participation. The school also recognises the potential risks associated with social media and is committed to helping pupils use online services safely, responsibly and in an age-appropriate way.

The school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils from online harm where this relates to their welfare and education, and to provide pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to recognise and manage risks online.

The school is committed to:

- Encouraging the safe, responsible and appropriate use of social media by staff, pupils and parents in support of the school's values and objectives.
- Safeguarding pupils from harm associated with social media and ensuring concerns are identified and responded to appropriately.
- Educating pupils about safe and responsible online behaviour, including how to seek help where they experience or witness harm.
- Protecting the reputation of the school and its community from inappropriate or irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting staff from online abuse, harassment and other inappropriate behaviour.
- Supporting parents to understand the opportunities and risks associated with social media and how they can help their children use online services safely and appropriately.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE ‘Data protection in schools’
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE ‘Keeping children safe in education’
- Online Safety Act 2023

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Code of Conduct for Parents
- Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Low-level Safeguarding Concerns
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Policy

- Cyber-security Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Behaviour Policy
- School Social Media Accounts – Terms of Use Agreement
- Safe Use of AI Policy
- Mobile Devices Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented by the school.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
- Ensuring their own knowledge of social media and online safety issues is up-to-date.
- Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction, with updates provided as required.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including against any of the protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
- In conjunction with the governing board, handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.

- Ensuring concerns and complaints arising from social media use are responded to appropriately and in accordance with relevant school policies.
- Working alongside the DPO and ICT technicians to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR and other data protection legislation.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- Taking lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety.
- Ensuring that safeguarding concerns arising from social media use are responded to in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Working with relevant staff to understand and address safeguarding risks associated with pupils' use of social media, including risks arising outside school where these affect pupils' safety or welfare.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff.
- Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.
- Reporting any safeguarding concern arising from social media use to the DSL or deputy DSL immediately, in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Code of Conduct for Parents.
- Supporting their child to use online platforms safely, responsibly and in an age-appropriate manner.
- Familiarising themselves with relevant age restrictions, parental controls and safety features available on the social media services their child uses.
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both themselves and their children.

Pupils will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Pupil Code of Conduct.
- Using social media safely, responsibly and in an age-appropriate manner, and following applicable age restrictions and terms of use.

- Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced on social media.
- Reporting incidents and concerns relating to social media in line with the procedures within this policy.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.

The Social Media Content Lead will be responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing all school-run social media accounts.
- Managing access to, and monitoring the appropriate use of, school-run social media accounts.
- Consulting with staff on the purpose of the social media account and the content published.
- Maintaining appropriate records of significant incidents involving the school's social media accounts, where necessary.
- Handling inappropriate comments or abuse posted on the school's social media accounts, or regarding the school.
- Creating a terms of use agreement, which all content published must be in accordance with.
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up-to-date and relevant.

ICT technicians will be responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the school's social media accounts.
- Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the headteacher.
- Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are reviewed at least annually and a record of these reviews is maintained in accordance with the Online Safety Policy.

School social media accounts

Social media accounts for the school will only be created by the marketing officer and other designated staff members, following approval from the headteacher. A school-based social media account will be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members and will be linked to an official school email account.

When setting up a school social media account, consideration will be given to the following:

- The purpose of the account

- Whether the overall investment will achieve the aim of the account
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether pupils, staff, parents or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account
- How much time and effort staff members are willing to commit to the account
- How the success of the account will be evaluated
- The privacy, security and safeguarding implications of the account, including who will be able to view, interact with or contribute content

The headteacher will be responsible for authorising members of staff and any other individual to have admin access to school social media accounts. Only people authorised by the headteacher will be allowed to post on the school's accounts.

Login credentials for school social media accounts will be stored securely and access will be restricted to individuals authorised by the headteacher. Appropriate security measures, including multi-factor authentication where available, will be used to protect school accounts from unauthorised access.

Content published through school social media accounts will comply with copyright, data protection and other legal requirements.

The school's social media accounts will comply with the platform's rules. The marketing officer will ensure anyone with authorisation to post on the school's social media accounts receives appropriate information or training on the platform and the rules around what can be posted.

School social media accounts will be moderated by the marketing officer or another designated member of staff.

Staff conduct

Only staff with authorisation from the headteacher will post on school accounts and they will adhere to the School Social Media Accounts – Terms of Use Agreement.

Staff will get content approved by the marketing officer before it is posted. Staff will only post content that meets the school's social media objectives, including the following:

- Reminders about upcoming events
- Good news regarding the school's performance, attainment or reputation
- Good news regarding the achievements of staff and pupils
- Information that parents should be aware of, e.g. school closure

Staff will ensure that their posts meet the following criteria:

- The post does not risk bringing the school into disrepute
- The post only expresses neutral opinions and does not include any personal views
- The post uses appropriate and school-friendly language
- The post is sensitive towards those who will read it, and uses particularly neutral and sensitive language when discussing something that may be controversial to some
- The post does not contain any wording or content that could be construed as offensive
- The post does not take a side in any political debate or express political opinions
- The post does not contain any illegal or unlawful content
- The post does not disclose personal or confidential information about a pupil, member of staff or other individual without an appropriate lawful basis
- Images, videos and other information relating to pupils are only published in accordance with the Data Protection Policy and safeguarding arrangements.
- The post does not disclose information that could place a pupil or other member of the school community at risk of harm.

Where a comment, message or other interaction with a school social media account raises a safeguarding concern, this will be reported to the DSL or a deputy DSL and handled in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Staff will not attempt to manage safeguarding disclosures solely through social media.

Staff use of personal social media

All staff will ensure that they use personal social media accounts in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be required to adhere to the following guidelines when using personal social media accounts:

- Staff members will not access personal social media platforms where this interferes with their professional duties or responsibilities
- Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts.
- Staff will not ‘friend’, ‘follow’ or otherwise contact pupils through their personal social media accounts. If pupils attempt to ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ a staff member, they will report this to the headteacher.
- Staff will be strongly advised to not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ parents on their personal accounts.

- Staff will take appropriate steps to manage the privacy and security of their personal social media accounts, while recognising that content shared online may become publicly available regardless of privacy settings.
- Staff will ensure it is clear that views posted on personal accounts are personal and are not those of the school.
- Staff will not use social media in a way that breaches professional standards, confidentiality requirements or school policies, or that could reasonably bring their suitability to work with children into question.
- Staff members will not use personal social media accounts to publish images, videos, personal information or other content relating to pupils obtained through their employment, or disclose confidential information about pupils or the school.
- Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Staff will not post confidential, inappropriate, discriminatory, defamatory or otherwise professionally unacceptable content about pupils, parents, colleagues or other members of the school community.
- Staff will maintain appropriate professional boundaries online and will not use personal social media to communicate with pupils in a manner that could constitute or give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal. Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.

Any attempted contact from a pupil that raises a safeguarding or professional-boundaries concern will be reported in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Where a member of staff becomes aware through social media of information that raises a safeguarding concern about a child, they will report this in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community via social media by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

Parent use of social media

Parents are unable to comment on or respond to information shared via the school's social media sites; however, parents should do so in a way that is respectful and considerate.

Parents will be asked not to share any photos or personal details of pupils when commenting on social media sites, nor post comments concerning other pupils or staff members.

Where a parent breaches this policy the school will respond proportionately to the nature and seriousness of the incident. This may include removing content or comments where the school is able to do so, restricting

the individual's ability to interact with school social media accounts, or taking further action in accordance with relevant school policies.

Serious or persistent misuse of social media, including threatening, abusive, discriminatory or unlawful behaviour, will be addressed in accordance with relevant school policies and may be reported to the appropriate authorities where necessary.

Where social media activity by a parent raises a concern about the safety or welfare of a child, the concern will be reported to the DSL or a deputy DSL and managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution.

Pupil use of social media

Pupils will not access social media during school time, unless this has been authorised for an appropriate educational purpose and appropriate security and safeguarding measures are in place.

In accordance with the Mobile Devices Policy, pupils will not use their mobile phone to access social media throughout the school day.

Pupils will be encouraged to critically evaluate information encountered on social media and will not knowingly create or share false or misleading information. Pupils will be aware that content generated or presented by AI tools may be inaccurate, misleading or manipulated.

Pupils will not attempt to ‘friend’, ‘follow’ or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Concerns arising from attempted contact will be managed on a case-by-case basis.

Pupils will not use social media to bully, harass, threaten, discriminate against or otherwise abuse members of the school community, or to share confidential or inappropriate information about others.

Pupils will be expected to comply with applicable age restrictions and other requirements governing access to social media and online services. Pupils will not attempt to circumvent age-assurance or other safety measures, including by providing false information or using another person's identification or account.

The school will keep pupils informed, in an age-appropriate manner, about changes to legal and regulatory requirements affecting children's access to social media and other online services.

Pupils will be encouraged to report harmful, inappropriate or concerning social media content or interactions to a trusted adult. Where a concern relates to the safety or welfare of a child, it will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils will be taught about risks associated with social media, including bullying and harassment, grooming and exploitation, contact with strangers, sharing personal information, making or sharing nudes and semi-

nudes, misinformation and AI-generated or manipulated content, and how to report concerns and access support where age-appropriate.

Where an incident also raises a safeguarding concern, the school's safeguarding procedures will take precedence and appropriate support will be provided to the children involved.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and managed in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Data protection principles

The school will obtain consent from parents using consent area on Arbor, which will confirm whether or not consent is given for posting images and videos of a pupil on social media platforms. Consent provided for the use of images and videos only applies to school accounts – staff, pupils and parents are not permitted to post any imagery or videos on personal accounts.

Where a pupil is assessed by the school to have the competence to understand what they are consenting to, the school will obtain consent directly from that pupil; otherwise, consent is obtained from whoever holds parental responsibility for the pupil.

A record of consent is maintained throughout the academic year, which details the pupils for whom consent has been provided. The DPO will be responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.

Parents are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents and pupils must inform the school in writing. Where parents or pupils withdraw or amend their consent, it will not affect the processing of any images or videos prior to when consent was withdrawn or amended. Processing will cease in line with parents' and pupils' requirements following this. Wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, the school will take measures to remove any posts before consent was withdrawn or amended, such as removing an image from a social media site.

Consent can be provided for certain principles only, for example only images of a pupil are permitted to be posted, and not videos. This will be made explicitly clear on the consent form provided. The school will only post images and videos of pupils for whom consent has been received.

Only school-owned devices will be used to take images and videos of the school community, which have been pre-approved by the online safety officer for use. Only appropriate images and videos of pupils will be posted in which they are suitably dressed, e.g. it would not be suitable to display an image of a pupil in swimwear.

When posting on social media, the school will use group or class images or videos with general labels, e.g. 'sports day'.

When posting images and videos of pupils, the school will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of a pupil being identified. The school will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms and pupils' full names will not be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent record log to ensure consent has been received for that pupil and for the exact processing activities required.
- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.

Any breaches of the data protection principles will be handled in accordance with the school's Cyber-security Policy.

Safeguarding

Any disclosures made by pupils to staff about online abuse, harassment or exploitation, whether they are the victim or disclosing on behalf of another child, will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns or allegations regarding a staff member's online behaviour that indicate they may have harmed a child, committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, will be reported and managed in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy. Where the concern relates to the headteacher, it will be reported to the chair of governors. Where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the concern to the headteacher, it will be reported directly to the LADO.

Concerns about a member of staff's online behaviour that do not meet the harm threshold will be reported and managed in accordance with the Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy.

Concerns regarding a pupil's online behaviour that raise a safeguarding concern will be reported to the DSL or a deputy DSL. The DSL will consider the concern, liaise with relevant staff and external agencies as appropriate, and ensure it is managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and any other relevant school policies.

Where there is reason to believe that a crime may have been committed in connection with a safeguarding concern arising from social media, the DSL will consider whether a referral to the police or another agency is required, in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant guidance. Where appropriate, the school will work with the police and other agencies to safeguard the children involved.

Incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

As part of the usual communication with parents, the school will reinforce the importance of pupils being safe online and inform parents what systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use. The school will also make clear what pupils are being asked to do online for school purposes, including the platforms they will be asked to access and who, if anyone, they will interact with from the school.

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns can arise through social media and other online activity, and that online and offline harms may overlap. Concerns may relate to content, contact, conduct or commercial risks and may involve interaction with other users or AI-enabled services.

Filtering and monitoring

The school will implement appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on its network and school-owned devices in accordance with the Online Safety Policy and relevant filtering and monitoring standards. These systems will be designed to safeguard pupils from harmful and inappropriate online content while avoiding unreasonable restrictions on what pupils can be taught in relation to online teaching and safeguarding.

Access to social media platforms and other websites or online services may be restricted or blocked where the school considers this necessary to safeguard pupils, maintain network security or support the appropriate use of school technology. Restrictions will be kept under review and adjusted where appropriate.

The school will monitor use of its network and school-owned devices in accordance with the Online Safety Policy. Where monitoring identifies activity that may indicate a safeguarding concern, this will be reported to the DSL or a deputy DSL and managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils and staff will not attempt to circumvent the school's filtering or security systems. Any attempt to do so will be managed in accordance with the relevant acceptable use agreement and, where appropriate, the Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct or Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Where an attempt to circumvent filtering or monitoring raises a safeguarding concern, this will be reported to the DSL.

Where inappropriate or harmful content is accessible through the school's network or devices, this will be reported to the appropriate member of staff so that the school's filtering arrangements can be reviewed and, where appropriate, the content blocked.

Where legitimate educational or safeguarding content has been incorrectly blocked, staff may request that access is reviewed in accordance with the procedures set out in the Online Safety Policy. Any decision to permit access will take account of safeguarding and cyber-security risks.

Cyberbullying

Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by pupils will be handled in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.

Cyberbullying against pupils or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with quickly and effectively wherever they occur in line with the Anti-bullying Policy. Allegations of cyberbullying from staff members will be handled in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

Training

The school recognises that early intervention can protect pupils who may be at risk of cyberbullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, staff will receive training in identifying

potentially at-risk pupils. Staff will receive training on social media as part of their new starter induction. Staff will receive ongoing training as part of their development.
Pupils will be educated about online safety and appropriate social media use through a variety of mediums, including assemblies, PSHE lessons and cross-curricular links. Pupils will be provided with material to reinforce their knowledge.
Parents will be invited to online safety and social media training on an annual basis and be signposted to relevant resources.
Training for all pupils, staff and parents will be refreshed in light of any significant incidents or changes.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and governing board.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2027.**

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils and parents.