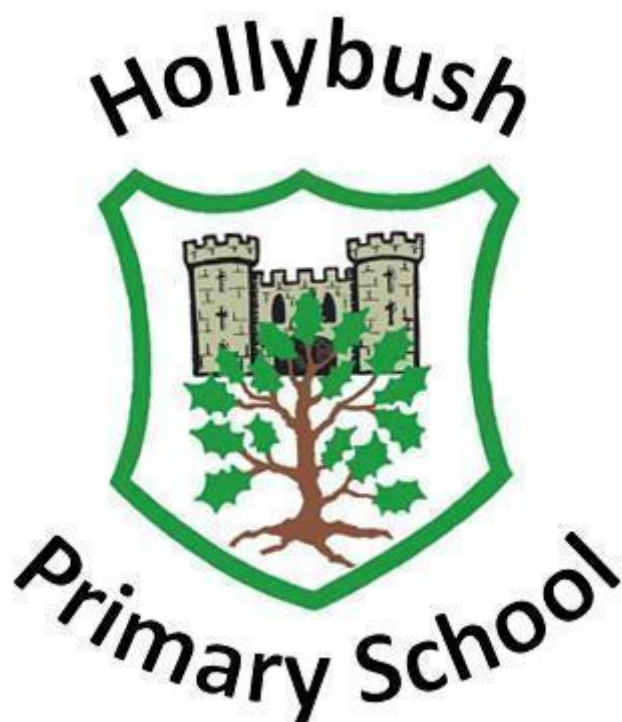




Social Media Policy

Approved by:	Governors	Latest Review: Autumn 2024
Next Review due:	Autumn 2025	

Additional guidance added Jul 2024

Amended wording July 2024

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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 code of conduct, data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, pupils 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 community should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are in private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation.

Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, code of conduct, child protection, complaints, and online safety policies.

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

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Malicious Communications Act 1988

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 and gaming platforms.

2. Use of official school social media

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

Facebook: [School Facebook Page](#)

Instagram: [hollybush_primary_school_herts](#)

These accounts are managed by Hannah Cracknell, Deputy Head and Charley Tilbury, School Business Manager.

Staff members who have not been authorised by Hannah Cracknell or Charley Tilbury to manage, or post to, the accounts, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

The school will post on Facebook & Instagram:

- Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, emergency closures including office opening hours)
- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about uniform)
- 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

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

- Names of individuals (unless they have given specific consent)
- Photos of pupils or staff who have declined to give or not yet 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

2.1. Moderation

Staff with access to the school social media accounts will ensure that passwords are kept secure and confidential. The school will not accept friend or follower requests from pupils on its social media sites.

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

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments

- 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.

2.2. 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 Instagram – 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.

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) and logged on Staff Safe.

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

Staff are required to adhere to the code of conduct in relation to communication and social media.

References, endorsements or advice on social media given by other members of staff (including communication apps such as whatsapp) must be clear that they are provided in a personal capacity.

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

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
- Be respectful to all in the local community

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
- Attempt to connect with staff through social media including messaging and gaming platforms.

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*

At Hollybush Primary School, everything that we do centres on our core values which determine the expectations we set for our staff and pupils. In order for us to be able to teach the children to live these values, we need to ensure that they are modelled throughout all aspects of school life including interactions within our community.

The school therefore expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils. It is difficult to insist that pupils behave respectfully towards one another if the adults they look to for guidance are failing to do so.

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 or other related policies.

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

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils
- Complain about the school, its values or policies
- 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. Photos and images

Parents may be permitted to take photos of their children at certain school events, such as sports day or during a production; however, parents are only able to take photos of their own children, and should only share photos of their own children on social media.

Parents must not take photos of other children, staff members or volunteers, nor post them on social media without the consent of those within the images or, where applicable, their parents. During events outside of school, such as dropping children off at the school gate, or whilst visiting the school, parents must not take photos of any members of the school community, nor share these photos on social media.

5.2. Whatsapp Groups

We understand Parents find Class WhatsApp groups a useful and efficient way of communicating to the whole class.

The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit the school community by keeping it closer. The school does not, however, condone parents sending messages about school as though a voice of authority.

The messages in the class WhatsApp groups come from parents in their personal capacity. The school will NOT post directly on any WhatsApp parent/carers groups.

School staff who are also parents should not be contacted via whatsapp in relation to school matters. All queries should be submitted to the school via the appropriate communication channel during school hours.

We expect parents/carers to follow the social media guidelines contained in this policy when using class WhatsApp groups.

The school will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Bringing the school or its staff into disrepute
- Communicating on behalf of the school

Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing. The school can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory content, occurs online. The headteacher can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and

effectively. The headteacher can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parent bodies.

Hollybush Primary School retains the right to request any damaging material to be removed from social media websites.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches may well necessitate the school seeking legal advice, which could, ultimately, lead to prosecution.

6. Compliance

6.1. Parents/Carers

Parents are responsible for supporting the school by monitoring their own use of social media and online messaging. Parents must adhere to the **Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents** at all times.

This is supported via the **home school agreement** and must be signed when each child joins the school.

The School will review this policy and the social media code of conduct on a bi-annual basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents. All parents will be required to read these policies each time any changes are made.

6.2. Pupils

Parents are responsible for ensuring they support the school by monitoring their children's use of social media and online messaging.

6.3. Staff

All staff must sign the staff code of conduct annually which details the staff social media expectations.

Staff should be aware that a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct could result in disciplinary action including but not limited to dismissal. Please see our disciplinary policy for further information.