



**The Westminster
School**

Safe, Happy and Learning Together

www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk

2022/2023

Social Media Policy

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	06/02/2023
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>P. A. Evans</i>
Head Teacher:	Mr O M Flowers
Lead Personnel:	J Turner
Date of Review:	06/02/2025

Introduction

Everyone at The Westminster School has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat all members of the School community with professionalism, responsibility and respect.

The school/trust recognises and embraces the numerous benefits and opportunities that social media offers. While employees are encouraged to engage, collaborate and innovate through social media, they should also be aware that there are some associated risks, especially around issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation

The purpose of this policy is to encourage good practice, to protect the school and its employees, and to promote the effective use of social media as part of school activities.

This policy covers personal and professional use of social media.

The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the school's IT facilities and equipment, or equipment belonging to members of staff.

Personal communications via social media accounts that are likely to have a negative impact on professional standards or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

School's Online and Social Media Presence

The School will use the website and its social media accounts to:

- Strengthen communication links with parents, carers, guardians and the wider community.
- Promote the successes of the School and our pupils to a wider audience.
- Promote special events such as parent/carer workshops, awareness days etc.
- Provide information regarding the school day, such as what the children have been learning or what happened when visitors come to the School.
- Photographs of students will only be used if parental permission has been granted and a child's full name will never be used.
- Signpost links to interesting articles to enhance learning opportunities.

In the interests of safeguarding, the School's website and social media accounts will be overseen by the School's Senior Leadership Team.

E-Safety and Social Media Conduct – Staff

- Use such sites with extreme caution, being aware of the nature of what you are publishing on-line in relation to your professional position. Do not publish any information online which you would not want your employer to see.
- Staff should be aware of their online reputation and recognise that their online activity can be seen by others including parents, pupils and colleagues on social media;
- Staff should be responsible for their words and actions in an online environment. They are therefore advised to consider whether any comment, photograph or video that they are about to post on a social networking site is something that they want pupils, colleagues, other employees of the trust, or even future employers, to read. Staff should also be aware of posts that others may post on their timeline and ensure that security settings are such that all posts have to be approved.
- Under no circumstances should school pupils or parents, past or present, be added as friends, unless known to you as a friend or relative prior to your appointment.
- Your role in school requires a high degree of professionalism and confidentiality.
- You must avoid bringing the School, into disrepute (e.g. by the use of social networks, the internet or through conversations with other colleagues or the general public).
- You must not post any comments, photographs, images or conversations on social networking websites which may bring you or the School into disrepute.
- Staff should not upload any content on to social media sites that:

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- is confidential to the school/trust or its staff
 - amounts to bullying
 - is discriminatory in any form
 - amounts to unlawful harassment or victimisation
 - brings the school/trust into disrepute
 - contains lewd, sexually explicit, threatening or similarly inappropriate or offensive comments, images or video clips
 - undermines the reputation of the school and/or individuals
 - is defamatory or knowingly false
 - breaches copyright
 - is in any other way unlawful.
- Security settings should be maintained at the highest level in order to prevent members of the public seeing any of your personal information.
 - Any communications or content you publish that causes damage to the School, Local Authority, any of its employees or any third party's reputation may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct to which the School and Local Authority Dismissal and Disciplinary Policies apply.
 - Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct.
 - The Local Authority expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

E-Safety and Social Media Conduct – Pupils and Parents/Carers/Guardians

- Pupils and parents/carers/guardians **must not** attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact members of staff through social media platforms. If attempts to contact members of staff through social media are made, they will be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Pupils, parents, carers, guardians and their families should not make defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the School or any of the pupils/parents/staff/governors at the School on social media platforms. This applies to both public and private forums.
- Pupils, parents, carers, guardians and their families should not post photographs of other people's children on social media platforms without their permission.
- Pupils, parents, carers and guardians are asked to not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- The Westminster School understands that pupils, parents, carers and guardians may use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp. Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the School will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing.
- The Westminster School can request a meeting with parents/carers/guardians if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.
- The Head Teacher can, with the permission of the parent/carer/guardian, view messages sent between pupils, parents, carers and guardians in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

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

Breaches of this policy

Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy (or if complaints are received about unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached this policy) will be investigated in accordance with the school bullying, disciplinary procedure or staff code of conduct. The member of staff will be expected to co-operate with the school's investigation which may involve:

- handing over relevant passwords and login details;
- printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content;

- determining that the responsibility or source of the content was in fact the member of staff.

The seriousness of the breach will be considered including the nature of the content, how long the content remained visible on the social media site, the potential for recirculation by others and the impact on the school/trust or the individuals concerned. Staff should be aware that actions online can be in breach of the harassment/IT/equality policies and any online breaches of these policies may also be treated as conduct issues in accordance with the disciplinary procedure. If the outcome of an investigation leads to disciplinary action, the consequences will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures. Serious breaches could result in the dismissal of the employee. Where conduct is considered to be unlawful, the school will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.

Complaining about the School, its Staff or Governors

The School has a Compliments and Complaints Procedure Policy in place and in the first instance, request that if you have any concerns about School, you should make an appointment to speak to a member of the School's Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible.