



# **Culcheth Primary School**

## **Social Media Policy**

### **Including the use of mobile phones, smart watches and digital photography**

Date policy last reviewed: January 2026

---

Last updated: January 2026

## **Contents:**

### Statement of intent

1. Purpose of the Policy
2. Social Media Sites
3. Scope
4. Definition of Social Media
5. Use of Social Networking sites in school time
6. Official School Social Media Accounts as part of School Service

### **Terms of Use**

7. Social Networking Applications
8. Guidance / protection for staff on using social networking
9. Guidance / protection for pupils on using social networking
10. Mobile phones and Smart Watches
11. Digital Photography and Video
12. Comments posted by Parents / Carers
13. Child Protection guidance
14. Cyberbullying
15. Safeguarding of Children – Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy
16. Monitoring and Review

## **Statement of intent**

The Staff and Governors of Culcheth Community Primary School recognise that many pupils and their families own a mobile phone. We also recognise that some parents/guardians request that their children bring a mobile phone to school for before and after school safety/security reasons.

Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore the school strongly discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by pupils. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise the school community how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites and mobile devices.

Our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

### **1. Purpose**

This policy outlines expectations for the safe, responsible, and professional use of social media, mobile phones, smart watches, and digital photography at Culcheth Community Primary School.

The policy aims to:

- Safeguard pupils and staff
- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.
- Protect privacy and personal data
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Ensure consistent practice across the school community

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy, and Data Protection (UK GDPR) Policy.

## **2. Social Media Sites**

Facebook is targeted at older teenagers and adults. They have a 'no under 13 year old' registration policy and recommend parental guidance for 13 to 16 year olds.

The following are extracts from Facebook privacy policy:

***"If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us"***

***"We strongly recommend that minors 13 years of age or older ask their parents for permission before sending any information about themselves to anyone over the Internet and we encourage parents to teach their children about safe internet use practices. Materials to help parents talk to their children about safe internet use can be found on this help page"***

WhatsApp recommend 13 years but do not appear to have a policy of debarring younger pupils. There are many primary age pupils active on WhatsApp, Facebook and other Social Media sites.

## **3. Scope**

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives.'

The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the School representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

## **4. Definition of Social Media**

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat)
- Messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp, Messenger)
- Blogs, forums, livestreaming, and gaming platforms
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com

- Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, for example Twitter

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School’s Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **5. Use of Social networking sites in worktime**

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Headteacher.

## **6. Social Networking as part of School Service**

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Headteacher first.

Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy.

### **6.1 Use and Purpose**

Official school social media accounts are used to:

- Share news and events
- Celebrate pupils’ achievements
- Support communication with parents/carers

### **6.2 Management**

- All official accounts must be authorised by the Headteacher
- Accounts will be managed by designated staff members
- Login details will be stored securely
- At least two authorised staff members will have access to each account

### **6.3 Content and Monitoring**

- Content must be appropriate, professional, and positive

- Written parental consent will be obtained before posting images or videos of pupils
- Pupils' full names will not be used alongside images
- Comments and messages will be monitored and inappropriate content removed

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally - facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Culcheth Community Primary School 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.

## **Terms of Use**

### **7. Social Networking applications**

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns.
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner.
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies.
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents.
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with.
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Headteacher.

- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.
- Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

## **8. Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking**

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites.
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18 years.
- Staff must not initiate friendships with pupils, or pupils' family/friends, under any circumstance.
- Staff who maintain social networking friendships with work colleagues are required to adhere to the requirements below relating to content of interactions.
- Staff must not make reference on social networking sites to the School, its employees, pupils, and their families. If staff adhere to this recommendation then the personal content of an individual's social networking memberships is unlikely to be of concern to the school.
- If individuals feel aggrieved about some aspect of their work or employment, there are appropriate informal and formal channels, internally within the school, which allow staff to raise and progress such matters. Social networks are not the appropriate forum to raise such matters. Employees should discuss any concerns with their head teacher/line manager in the first instance. Guidance is also available from HR and trade unions.
- This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment
- Photos of staff should never be uploaded without that person's express permission.
- Comments about individuals (staff, children, parents or governors) should not be made online at any time.
- Be aware that threads on your Facebook page can be read by others.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school.

- School Representatives are advised to check their security profiles and privacy settings on the social networks that they use. If individuals are not clear about how to restrict access to their content, they should regard all content as publicly available and act accordingly.
- In using social networking sites, staff are recommended to only post content that they would wish to be in the public domain. Even if content is subsequently removed from a site it may remain available and accessible. Staff should consider not only how content could reflect on them, but also on their professionalism and the reputation of the School as their employer.
- Even with privacy settings in place it is still possible that the personal details of staff may be accessed more broadly than the other networkers identified to them. Any reference to such information by pupils and/or their families, which a staff member deems to be inappropriate or is concerned about, should be reported to their line manager in the first instance.
- If a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil (or a group of pupils) has made inappropriate/insulting/threatening comments about them, or other staff members, on a social networking site; then they must report this to the Head teacher so that the appropriate process can be followed.

## **8.2 Staff Personal Social Media Accounts**

- Staff are advised to use the highest privacy settings
- Staff must not post content that could bring the school, Trust, or local authority into disrepute
- Confidential school matters must not be discussed online

Any breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action

## **9. Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking**

- No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. This is the guidance from both Facebook and WhatsApp. There is a mechanism on Facebook where pupils can be reported via the Help screen.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day.
- Any pupil's with mobile phones or smart watches must hand these into the class teacher at the start of the school day so these can be taken to the school office.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Headteacher. Parents will be informed if this happens.
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day.
- Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision.

- Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to a grown up at home or your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying.

## **10. Use of Mobile Phones and Smart Watches**

### **10.1 Staff**

- Staff may bring personal mobile phones onto school premises but must keep them on silent
- Personal devices must not be used during teaching time unless authorised by a senior leader
- Staff must not use personal devices to take photographs or videos of pupils
- Personal devices must not be used in areas where pupils are present for personal use

### **10.2 Pupils**

- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school unless there is a specific safeguarding or medical reason agreed with the Headteacher
- Where permitted, devices must be handed in at the start of the day and collected at the end
- Smart watches capable of recording images, video, or accessing the internet are not permitted

### **10.3 Visitors and Volunteers**

- Visitors and volunteers must not use mobile devices to photograph or record pupils
- Any breach may result in removal from the premises

## **11. Digital Photography and Video**

### **11.1 School Devices**

- Only school-owned devices will be used to take photographs or videos of pupils
- Images will be used for educational or promotional purposes only
- Images will be stored securely on school systems

## **11.2 Consent**

- Parental consent will be obtained annually for the use of pupil images
- Consent preferences will be respected at all times

## **11.3 Use by Parents/Carers**

- Parents/carers may take photographs or videos at school events for personal use only
- Images must not be shared on social media if they include other pupils without permission

## **12. Comments posted by Parent/Carers**

Parent and carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding use of social networking. Methods of school communication include the prospectus, the website, newsletters, letters and verbal discussion.

- Parents are expected not to post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites
- Parents should make complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social networking sites
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social networking sites about any member of the school community

## **13. Child protection guidance**

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes
- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.
- If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out.

## 14. Cyberbullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Culcheth Community Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

Pupils will be taught about safe and responsible online behaviour through the curriculum.

Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. Incidents of online bullying or misuse of digital devices will be managed in line with the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment.

This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.

## 15. Safeguarding of Children

### Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Photography Policy

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for their development records. **Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of school children for their records during the school day.**

- Under the data protection act of 2018 school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders. Photographs will be stored on the school network which is password protected until the school ceases to operate, if this occurs then all photograph's will be shredded or deleted from the school network.
- The school's digital cameras/iPads must not leave the school setting (unless on an educational visit). Photographs are printed in the setting by staff and images are then removed from the camera memory.
- Photographs may be taken during indoor and outdoor play and learning and displayed in school and in albums or a child's development records for children and parent carers, governors, OFSTED, LA officers (on the password protected area of the school website), to look through.
- Often photographs may contain other children in the background.
- School Performances may be recorded by video and photographs by staff.
- Events such as Sports Day, outings, Christmas and fundraising events may be recorded by video and photographs by staff and parent/carers but always

in full view of all attending. Parents must not post photographs or video containing other children on social media websites (as detailed in the policy above).

- On occasion the school might like to use the photographs of children taking part in an activity to advertise/promote the school via the website etc, however in this instance; specific parental permission may be required.
- Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras so staff mobile phones must not be used to take pictures of children in our school. Visitors may only use their phones in the foyer or outside the building and should be challenged if seen using a camera inappropriately or photographing children.
- The use of camera and mobile phones are prohibited in toilets.
- All school cameras and videos should be kept securely at all times and used with appropriate authority.
- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones will be switched off or put on 'silent' or 'discreet' mode.
- Mobile phone use is not permitted during teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings.
- If a member of staff is found taking photographs or recording video footage with a mobile phone and uploading images or video onto the internet, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action will be taken according to the schools Disciplinary Policy.
- Staff are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure that you are reached quickly. The office number is Telephone number 01925 764312
- All staff will be asked to sign to say that they have read and understood this policy through the Staff Code of Conduct.
- All use of social media and digital devices must comply with safeguarding responsibilities.
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 will be adhered to at all times
- Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or headteacher.
- Concerns involving the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors or Trust.

## **Pupils**

- We recommend that pupils do not bring mobile phones to school unless they are walking home alone at the end of the school day.
- Pupils are advised that if they bring a mobile phones or smart watches onto the school grounds during the school day, they must keep them switched off during the day and handed to the class teacher at the start of the day to be returned to the children at the end of the day.
- Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way. Telephone number 01925 764312
- Pupils are not to take photos of other pupils or staff or record video footage with a mobile phone or smart watch whilst in school.

### **Consequences**

If pupils fail to follow these guidelines the following consequences may be applied:

- Confiscation of the mobile phone (handed back to the parent at the end of the day).
- Communication with parents/guardians regarding mobile phone use at school.
- If images of other pupils or school staff have been taken, the phone will not be returned to the student until the images have been removed by the student in the presence of a teacher and their parents will be spoken to immediately.
- A student being banned from bringing a mobile phone onto the school grounds.

This policy supports the school's Safeguarding Policy. It has been endorsed by the Governors and will be monitored, reviewed and amended as required.

***It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person.***

### **16. Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed every **two years** or sooner if required due to changes in legislation, Trust guidance, or school practice. In particular, it will be reviewed in line with updates to *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*.

by the headteacher and the DSL. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

The scheduled review date for this policy is **2028**

## **Appendix A: Staff Acceptable Use Agreement (Social Media and Mobile Devices)**

All staff, volunteers, and students working at Culcheth Community Primary School must agree to the following:

- I will follow the school's Social Media, Mobile Devices and Digital Photography Policy at all times
- I will maintain professional boundaries online and offline with pupils and families
- I will not use personal mobile phones, smart watches, or other personal devices to photograph or record pupils
- I will only use school-owned devices for taking images or videos of pupils
- I will not communicate with pupils via personal social media or messaging accounts
- I will report any safeguarding concerns or breaches of this policy immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- I understand that failure to comply with this agreement may result in disciplinary action

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix B: Parent and Carer Summary Leaflet**

### **Social Media, Mobile Phones and Digital Images – What Parents Need to Know**

At Culcheth Community Primary School, the safety and wellbeing of our pupils is our highest priority.

#### **Mobile Phones and Smart Watches**

- Only Year 6 pupils are permitted to bring mobile phones to school
- This is intended to support pupils who travel independently to and from school
- Mobile phones and smart watches must be handed to the class teacher at the start of the school day
- Devices are stored securely and locked in the school office until the end of the day
- The school accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones or smart watches brought onto the premises

#### **Images and Videos**

- The school will only use photographs or videos of pupils with parental consent
- Parents/carers should not share images of other pupils on social media without permission

#### **Social Media**

- We encourage respectful and positive engagement with the school
- Concerns should always be raised directly with the school rather than on social media

Thank you for helping us keep all children safe.

**Signature:**