



# Pashley Down Infant School

*Learning at Pashley is an amazing adventure*

## Social Media Policy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The internet provides a range of social media channels that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as *Facebook* to keeping up with other people's lives on X and maintaining pages on online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*.
- 1.2 While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Pashley Down Infant School staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media.
- 1.3 It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school and East Sussex County Council are safeguarded.
- 1.4 Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.
- 1.5 All staff and governors should be aware of the General Data Protection Policy and data that needs to be kept confidential and the need for respecting individual privacy.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to Pashley Down Infant School governing body, all teaching and other staff, whether employed by the County Council or employed directly by the school, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school or the County Council, teacher trainees and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.
- 2.2 This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school (see sections 5, 6, 7 and Appendices A and B).
- 2.3 This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example *Facebook*, *Instagram*), blogs, microblogs such as *Twitter*, chat rooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*, social bookmarking sites such as *del.icio.us* and content sharing sites such as *Tik Tok* and *YouTube*. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

## 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 Pashley Down Infant School is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:
  - the Human Rights Act 1998
  - Common law duty of confidentiality
  - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
  -

- 3.2 Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:
- Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
  - Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
  - School or County Council business or corporate records containing organisational or publicly sensitive information
  - Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
  - Politically sensitive information.
- 3.3 Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:
- Libel Act 1843
  - Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
  - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
  - Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
  - Malicious Communications Act 1998
  - Communications Act 2003, and
  - Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
  - GDPR 2018
- 3.4 Pashley Down Infant School and the County Council could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyber bullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council liable to the injured party.

#### **4. RELATED POLICIES**

- 4.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school and County Council policies:
- East Sussex County Council Code of Conduct for Employees
  - Acceptable Use Policy
  - GDPR policy

#### **5. PRINCIPLES – *BE PROFESSIONAL, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL***

- 5.1 You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school or County Council and your personal interests.
- 5.2 You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council into disrepute.
- 5.3 You must not represent your personal views as those of Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council on any social medium.
- 5.4 You must not discuss personal information about pupils, Pashley Down Infant School or County Council staff and other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media.
- 5.5 You must not use social media or online channels in any way to digitally attack, insult, abuse defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council.

- 5.6 You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council.

## 6. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 6.1 Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of Pashley Down Infant School or County Council or service providers for the school or County Council in their personal web space. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and the County Council and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.
- 6.2.1 Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil, whether from Pashley Down Infant School or any other school, unless the pupils are family members.
- 6.2.2 Pashley Down Infant School does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.
- 6.3 Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- 6.4 If staff members wish to communicate with pupils through social media sites or to enable pupils to keep in touch with one another, they can only do so with the approval of the school and through official school sites created according to the requirements specified in section 7 and Appendix A.
- 6.5 Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils they receive in their personal social media accounts. — Instead, if they receive such requests from pupils who are not family members, they must discuss these in general terms in class and signpost pupils to become 'friends' of the official school site.
- 6.5.1 On leaving Pashley Down Infant School service, staff members must not contact Pashley Down Infant School pupils by means of personal social media sites. — Similarly, staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media.
- 6.8 When working at Pashley Down Infant School, staff members may, as part of their employment, have access to personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, County — Council staff and other parties. This information should be treated as confidential and must not be discussed or shared, digitally or otherwise, during their employment or after leaving the school.
- 6.9 Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school or County Council uniforms or clothing with school or County Council logos or images identifying sensitive school or County Council premises (eg care homes, secure units) must not be published on personal web space.
- 6.10 School or County Council email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

6.11 Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia* in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself.

6.12 Pashley Down Infant School or County Council corporate, service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal web space.

**At Pashley Down Infant School the personal use of social media is not allowed on the school site.**

6.13 Staff members must remember that on social media nothing is guaranteed to remain 'private' and that social media posts can easily be shared by others or screenshots taken and then shared. They must consider this when posting on their private social media channels and remember they are responsible for their words and actions online as well as in person. Staff members 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 would be happy for pupils, colleagues, or even future employers, to read. If there are any questions relating to potential online content, staff should seek advice from the Social Media Manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team prior to posting.

6.14 Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and can make it difficult to maintain professional relationships.

6.15 Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online. It is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers or other personal information. It is essential that contact details are not given away.

6.16 Staff must not access private social media in school. However, at times when they need to access social media in class to support or engage learning, teachers must log in as Pashley Down School to keep their own social media accounts private from pupils.

## **7. USING SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHALF OF PASHLEY DOWN INFANT SCHOOL**

7.1 Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another.

7.2 There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with pupils or others. Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage.

7.3 Staff members must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites. Staff need to keep this in mind if participating in videos or Facebook Live streaming while at home.

7.4 In social media posts posted on the school's official channels, we will prioritise keeping the identity of pupils private by concealing faces, using Christian names only, and not

disclosing any personal information. All staff who are posting photos or videos will be aware of the importance of protecting the children's identity. When there is a necessity to show children's faces or identities on our social media pages (for special events or promotions) we will only do so with signed permission from parents. When the school wants to promote events or pupil achievements, they will use a more private and secure social media such as ClassDojo, which is specifically aimed at safeguarding pupils and can only be viewed by parents of the school.

7.5 Staff members who have admin rights on social media sites on behalf of the school are fully aware of parents who have given permission for their child's image to be used and those parents who have not. These members of staff are the current teaching staff and Senior Leadership Team.

7.6 The Social Media Manager, Emma Lewis, is responsible for addressing any concerns and/or questions employees may have about the use of social media. The Social media Manager must always operate within the boundaries of this policy and ensure that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them. The Social Media Manager is responsible for giving specialist advice on the use of social media and implementing and reviewing this policy.

7.7 On entry to the school, parents are asked for permission to use their child's image on all social media. Under the terms of the School Privacy Notice, parents have the right to withdraw their consent at any time by requesting the consent alteration / withdrawal form. The requested alterations will then be acted upon within five working days of term time. (See appendix ii)

## **8. MONITORING OF INTERNET USE**

8.1 Pashley Down Infant School monitors usage of its internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

8.2 Users of Pashley Down Infant School email and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

## **9. REPORTING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES**

9.1 Any content or online activity which raises a safeguarding concern must be reported to the lead designated safeguarding officer in the school.

9.2 Any online concerns should be reported as soon as identified as urgent steps may need to be taken to support the child.

9.3 With regard to personal safeguarding, you should report any harassment or abuse you receive online while using your work accounts.

## **10. REPORTING, RESPONDING AND RECORDING CYBERBULLYING INCIDENTS**

10.1 Staff should never engage with cyberbullying incidents. If, during the course of your employment with this school, you discover a website containing inaccurate, inappropriate

or inflammatory written material relating to you, a pupil or another member of staff, or images of you which have been taken and/or which are being used without permission, you should immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Social Media Manager.

- 10.2 Staff should keep any records of abuse directed at either staff members or pupils, such as text, emails, voicemail, website or social media. If appropriate, screen shots of messages or web pages can be taken and the time, date and address of site should be recorded.

## 11. BREACHES OF THE POLICY

- 11.1 Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved, in line with Pashley Down Infant School or County Council Disciplinary Policy and Procedure including reporting a data breach to the school DPO.
- 11.2 A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council or any illegal acts or acts that render Pashley Down Infant School or the County Council liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- 11.3 Contracted providers of Pashley Down Infant School or County Council services must inform the relevant school or County Council officer immediately of any breaches of this policy so that appropriate action can be taken to protect confidential information and limit the damage to the reputation of the school and the County Council. Any action against breaches should be according to contractors' internal disciplinary procedures.

## 13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The way people use both the internet and social media changes frequently and at pace. It is almost impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media within this policy. However, the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium or channel it applies to. When using social media, staff should be aware of the potential impact on themselves, the school and its students. This applies for both work-related or personal use of the internet; whether during working hours or otherwise; and regardless of whether social media is accessed using the employer's personal equipment or using equipment within a work setting. Staff should use discretion and common sense when engaging in any online communication or activity. There are some general rules and best practice in the appendix which staff may find helpful.

## APPENDIX

### i) RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Remember that nothing you post online is really private. Below are some common-sense guidelines and recommendations that staff are advised to follow to ensure responsible and safe use of social media.

- Do not add pupils as friends or contacts in your social media accounts.
- Follow this social media policy.
- Always maintain professional boundaries. Do not communicate with pupils online unless through official school accounts.
- Think about the potential risks: for example, the blurring of boundaries by adding parents to your private social media accounts (refer to policy).
- Consider using an alternative name on sites such as Facebook to make it harder for pupils to find you. For example, some members use their partner's surname online but their own surname in school.
- Never post anything that is offensive or aggressive, even if you are very angry or upset. It can easily be taken out of context.
- Remember, humour is relative. For example, posting images and/or text about a recent stag or hen night may be deemed inappropriate. Likewise, a few 'lighthearted' comments and/or images about colleagues or students may not be perceived as such by others. The guiding rule is: if in doubt, don't post it.
- Make sure you regularly check and refresh your site page to ensure it is free of any inappropriate comments and/or images.
- If you are tagged in something on Facebook that you consider inappropriate, use the remove tag feature to untag yourself (for details on how to do this, refer to the Facebook help centre).
- Be cautious of accepting 'friend requests' from people you do not really know. Simply being a 'Facebook friend' does not mean they should automatically be given access to your information.
- Review your profile information and settings on Facebook, Instagram, X and other sites to ensure it is appropriate as it may be accessed by others such as colleagues, pupils, parents and potential employers.
- Check your privacy and security settings regularly, and keep your date of birth and home address to yourself. Identity theft is a growing crime and this kind of information could be used to gain access to your bank or credit card account.
- If you wish to share your thoughts online about teaching, politics and life in general, consider doing so anonymously, through a networking account or blog which cannot be attributed to you. Check that anything you post does not identify you, your school, pupils or parents.
- Ensure that any comments and/or images could not be deemed defamatory or in breach of copyright legislation.
- Never post any information which can be used to identify a pupil.
- Do not use social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues or air any other internal grievances.
- Do not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Do not engage in any conduct (using personal insults, obscenities) which would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Do not use social media to 'whistleblow' – raise concerns through the proper channels which would entitle you to legal protection (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998).

## Appendix

### ii) Social media part of the parent consent form

#### Use of information and image (including photographs and video recordings)

*Parents often take photographs or videos at School Events (e.g. Christmas Play, Sports Day, etc.). These must be for personal use only within your family and **MUST** not be shared online or published in any form on any social media. /*

*I give my permission for my child:*

To be photographed/videoed and for these photographs/videos to be used for School purposes such as but not limited to: display boards, newsletters, class activities, school website, Prospectus, Social Media sites used by the school e.g. Twitter and Facebook (Please note that once images are uploaded, they will be subject to the terms and conditions of the social media site. Neither you nor the school will have control over how those images are further used, amended or reproduced, either by the site or by the public. Please note that websites can be viewed throughout the world and not just in the United Kingdom where UK and European law applies). I understand that the photographs/videos will not clearly identify individuals and that full names will not be used (first name only but with surname initial if there is more than one child with first name in class).	
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