

Oakgrove Integrated Primary & Nursery School



Social Media Policy

Date: Oct 2022

Review Date: Oct 2025

Introduction

Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery acknowledge that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social media sites. Social media plays an important role in the lives of many people. These sites are powerful tools and are fast becoming an integral part of our lives. The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways.

We recognise that there are many benefits to be reaped from the use of social media but understand that the use of such sites also bring risks to both children and adults alike

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Encourage responsible, positive and constructive use of social media.
- Prevent and avoid potential damage to the reputation of Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery and its employees, caused by irresponsible or unauthorised use of social media.
- Protect all school stakeholders, and remind them of their personal responsibilities both in and out of school when using social media.

The aim of this policy is to provide a balance between supporting the use of social media, whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is the term commonly used for websites which allow people to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests in a virtual community. Social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter are well-known examples but the term also covers other web based services such as blogs, online discussion forums and message boards, video and audio podcasts, wikis, photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube.

This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new

ways of communicating advancing every day.

Scope

This policy covers the use of social media applications by all school stakeholders, including teachers, support staff, governors, pupils, parents, supply staff, work experience and teaching practice students and volunteers.

Access to Social Media on School Premises

- School equipment must not, at any time, be used for personal access to social media.
- School equipment may only be used to access and post to social media on behalf of the school, by official users, or as part of any approved curriculum activities.
- Employees may use any personal devices they own to access social media during any breaks, provided this is done responsibly, in accordance with this policy, and all other relevant policies of the school and away from the presence of pupils

Approved use of Social Media on behalf of the school

- All use of social media on behalf of the school (official use) must comply fully, and be approved in accordance with this policy and all other relevant policies of the school. It must also comply with all relevant laws.
- Only official users *approved by the Principal or Vice-Principal may use social media on behalf of the school, or post any image, photograph, or information of any nature relating to the school, it's pupils, officers or employees*

The use of Social Media by pupils

We wish to highlight that children must be at least 13 years old to use social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. As safeguarding children is of fundamental importance to us all in Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery and we become aware that any of our pupils have registered and are users of such sites, parents will be informed and further action may taken as necessary.

In addition, pupils will be made aware that:

- They should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with school employees, in any way, on social media applications. If pupils attempt to do this, the employee will inform the Head teacher and parents will be informed.
- School computers are not to be used to access social media 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.
- Our school has a zero tolerance to cyber bullying. Pupils will be encouraged to report any improper contact or cyber bullying to a member of school staff as soon as it happens.

The use of Social Media by parents and carers

Parents and carers have a right to use social media and Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery respect that. **However, the school also has a right to protect its reputation and has a duty of care to our pupils and employees.** In that regard, we wish to make parents and carers aware of our expectations regarding their use of social media:

- Parents must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social media sites when these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Parents must not post any information about Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery on their personal social media accounts. Such information may be passed to the official users of the school's social media sites, for posting on the school's official accounts, if desired.
- Parents should address any concerns or complaints through official school channels rather than posting them on social media sites.
- Parents should not post malicious or fictitious comments on social media sites about any member of the school community.
- Parents should report any damaging or negative comment/s about the school or its personnel on social media to the principal.

Effective communication, following principles of mutual respect, is the best means of ensuring high quality experiences for all in Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery. In the case of inappropriate use of social media by parents, the school will contact the parent asking them to remove such comments and reserve the right to seek redress through the appropriate channels.

Personal use of Social Media by staff

All employees of Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery (teachers, support staff and governors) have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect. It is important for everyone to protect their professional reputation by ensuring that they use their personal accounts in an appropriate manner.

We also encourage our staff to ensure that their personal reputation is not compromised by inappropriate postings.

Our code of conduct for the personal use of social media by staff is as follows:

- Staff should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with pupils, in any way, on social media applications (including past pupils under the age of 18).
- Staff must immediately inform the principal if pupils attempt to “follow”, “friend” or engage with them, in any way, on social media applications.
- Staff should never use or access social media sites of pupils (including past pupils under the age of 18).
- Staff should not “follow”, “friend” or engage with parents, in any way, on social media applications unless they are friends outside of school.
- Staff should report any damaging or negative comment about the school on social media to the principal or vice principal.
- Staff must not post derogatory or inappropriate comments about pupils, parents, colleagues or anyone else at / or connected with the school. Staff should not put online

- any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole school community or be incompatible with your professional role.
- Staff should ensure that your online activity, **both in school and outside school**, will not bring your organisation or professional role into disrepute.
 - Staff should not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
 - Staff must not post information or opinions about Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery or pictures/videos of school events. Such information may be passed to the official users of the school's social media sites, for posting on the school's official accounts, if desired.
 - Staff must not use social media within lesson times (for personal use).
 - Staff should review and adjust their privacy settings to give them the appropriate level of privacy and confidentiality.
 - Staff are encouraged to review their postings on social media sites to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate.
 - Staff must not use social media in a way that would put them in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
 - Staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social media sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. There may be some instances where it is deemed appropriate to share mobile telephone numbers with some parents for professional purposes, in accordance with school policy and with the knowledge of SLT.

Please note that the term "staff" includes teachers, support staff, governors, supply staff, work experience and teaching practice students and volunteers.

Any breaches of this code will be fully investigated. Oakgrove Integrated Primary School and Nursery will take appropriate action in order to protect the school's reputation and that of its staff, parents, governors, children and anyone else directly linked to the school.

Review of policy

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies, this policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments in the use of technologies, new threats to E-safety or incidents that have taken place

Signed; N. Gill 15th Oct 2019

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