



Social media policy

Approved by:

Date: September 2026

Review due by:

September 2027

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 data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, students 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 should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, harassment, child protection, safer recruitment, and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

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.

2. Use of official school social media

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

Facebook: Friends of Neston Primary School

Facebook: Neston Primary School and Nursery

These accounts are managed by members of SLT.

2.1 Facebook

The school will post on Facebook:

- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- 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
- Invitations to provide feedback

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

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
 - Harmful or abusive comments
 - Messages to specific people
 - Political statements
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- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

2.3 Moderation

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.

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.

Staff members will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff **must not**:

- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present
- Complain about the school, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Reference or share information about individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Post images of pupils
- Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school
- Link their social media profile to their work email account
- Use personal social media during timetabled teaching time except in a professional capacity.

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

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) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

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

4. Personal use of social media by pupils

Primary aged pupils are too young to be accessing social media. Below is listed the guidance age of children and various social media sites:

Facebook age 13+

X age 13+

Instagram age 13+

Snapchat age 13+

TikTok age 13+

WhatsApp age 16+

We are aware that some parents allow their children access to various social media/messaging sites. In these instances;

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
- 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

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

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

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils.

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

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

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils
- Complain about the school
- 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 WhatsApp groups

We expect parents/carers to follow the above social media guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups.

See Appendix 1 for the Parents' WhatsApp code of conduct.

6. Training and awareness

As part of our curriculum, children are taught about the dangers of using social media. We also invite external agencies to workshop with our children and parents. Staff CPD also covers online safety.

7. Monitoring and review

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, for legitimate business purposes. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

The headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the school.

This policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the governing body.

8. Related policies

- Safeguarding policy
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Mobile phone use policy

9. Appendix 1 – Parents WhatsApp code of conduct

Class/Parent WhatsApp Groups

To aid communication between parents and carers many of our classes or groups of parents have set up WhatsApp groups, which OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY of the school. We know these offer a great way to support and communicate with each other. The messages in the WhatsApp groups come from parents in their personal capacity. The school does NOT post directly on any WhatsApp parent/carer groups.

Most of the time, group chats will be a beneficial resource and an enjoyable place to be in. However, these same spaces also have the power to inflame; they are a potential source of misinformation and can fuel bad feeling. At worst, online parent communication groups have the potential to create unnecessary concerns. In order to prevent any offense or upset, we expect that everyone using these groups within our school community read and follow the code of conduct listed below:

Code of Conduct

Parents should adhere to the following guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups:

- The group should never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a teacher, child or parent in the class or school
- The group is not a political platform for airing opinions on current affairs
- The group should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group
- The group should be used keeping in mind mutual respect and cultural sensitivity between all its members
- Only parents of children currently in the school should be included in the group.

Please note, the school considers the following online activity inappropriate:

- Abusive or personal comments about any member of the school's community
- Displays of anger including swearing, or using offensive language
- Bringing the school into disrepute
- Posting aggressive, defamatory or libellous comments
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children
- Bullying
- Racist comments
- Perpetuating rumours not known to be true

The school takes safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately.

Raising Concerns

If you are concerned about inappropriate comments on a class WhatsApp group, in confidence, please contact Mrs Elliott by emailing head@nestonpri.cheshire.sch.uk or phoning the school office on 0151 832 6251.

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct detailed above, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- Send a warning letter to the parent
- Invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or governor.
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Ban the parent from the school site

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way.
