



St George's Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy

Social Media Policy and Procedures

We are learning and growing together as God's family. We will always do our best to love and respect each other as we prepare for our future.

Statement of Intent

Social media and social networking sites play an important role in the lives of many people. We recognise that sites bring risks, but equally there are many benefits to be reaped. This gives clarity to the way in which social media is to be used by the school, staff, pupils, governors, volunteers and visitors at St George's Catholic Primary School. It will also provide guidance for parents.

Here at St George's we have a responsibility to

- Safeguard our pupils against the potential dangers of social media.
- Educate our pupils about how to protect themselves online. E-Safety is a vitally important part of our Computing Curriculum.
- Prevent and avoid damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protect our staff/governors from cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Prevent the use of social media as a tool for radicalisation and extremist views.

The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and Procedures of St George's Catholic Primary School.

Parents and carers will be expected to promote safe social media behaviour and will be expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child/children at home.

Social Media Use Within School

Any child identified from the issue of the School's Acceptable Use of the Internet and ICT Systems Parent Permission Form will never have their photographs published either on social media or on the school's website.

Pupils do not have access to any social media platforms within school, unless it is part of their curriculum.

We are a smartphone free school for pupils.

We encourage pupils to take a SMART approach to social media behaviour:

Safe – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online.
Follow age restriction rules.

Meeting – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents/carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.

Accepting – We advise that pupils only accept emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.

Reliable – We teach pupils about the dangers of believing everything they see online.

Tell – We encourage pupils to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

The school uses the school Ping App to:

- Keep parents/carers informed of upcoming events and notices.
- Support and promote nationwide initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week, World’s Biggest Coffee Morning, Children in Need, World Book Day etc.
- Support and promote our Parent Staff Association (PSA).
- Notify parents of any necessary changes or details, especially on school journey, school trips and sporting events.

Social Media Use Outside School

Governors, Members of Staff, Volunteers and Visitors

- Should ensure that they have the highest privacy settings on any social media sites which they use.
- Should avoid identifying themselves as a governor/employee of St George’s Catholic Primary School on social media.
- Must not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its governors, staff, pupils or parents.
- Must not post information or opinions about St George’s Catholic Primary School or photos of school events, even if they are a parent employee.
- Must not post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the school.
- Should be aware that if their out-of-school activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.
- Must not “friend” or otherwise contact pupils or parents/carers through social media if their only contact with these is as a result of their position within the school.
- Must not accept “friend” requests if the relationship is purely staff/parent, and there is no previous or alternative relationship.
- Must not accept “friend” requests from pupils, including past pupils under the age of 16 years.
- School laptops should not be used for personal email or social media activity.

Parents/Carers

- Should promote safe social media behaviour and take responsibility for the social media habits of their child/children at home. St George’s Catholic Primary School does not support pupils signing up to social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil’s age.

- Should not use social media as a form of communication with the school. Methods of school communication are the website, newsletters, letters, emails and verbal discussion. School policies and documents provide further information regarding appropriate channels of communication and means of resolving differences of opinion. Effective communication following principles of mutual respect is the best means of ensuring the best learning experiences for the child.
- Must not attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact governors or members of staff through social media if the relationship is purely parent/staff, and there is no previous or alternative relationship.
- Must not post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its governors, staff or pupils.
- Must not post pictures of pupils, other than their own children, on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event.
- Must not transmit electronically any child’s image without their parents’ express permission.

Guidance for Parents on WhatsApp Groups

Our Position:

Parent WhatsApp groups are informal, parent-led groups that are not managed, monitored, or endorsed by the school.

Guidelines for Respectful Communication:

- Be respectful and courteous to all members
- Avoid posting anything that could be considered offensive, defamatory, or discriminatory.
- Do not share confidential information about your own child or other children, families, or staff.
- Do not use the group to criticise staff, other parents, or pupils, or the school.
- Avoid discussing school matters that should be raised directly with the school.

Safeguarding and Child Protection:

Online safety is essential, parents should understand the risks of online communication, including cyberbullying, sharing of inappropriate content, and the potential for harmful online interaction with other users.

Report any safeguarding concerns to the school immediately, not in the group.

Raising Concerns with School:

The school formal complaints procedure is available on the school website and from the school office.

The WhatsApp group is not the appropriate place to raise complaints about the school, staff, or other children.

Other policies linked to this policy are:

- Computing and E-Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy/Child Protection Policy

