KINTBURY ST. MARY'S
CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our Christian values of hope, friendship and respect support our caring ethos. With our rich and diverse curriculum these underpin our belief that everyone in our school community can develop a sense of self and understanding of their place in our world in order to achieve and flourish throughout life.

'Love thy neighbour as thyself' Luke 10:25-37

Social Media Policy

Approved by: The Governing Body

Date: 10.12.25

Next Review date: Autumn 2026

Statement of intent

At Kintbury St. Mary's Church Of England Primary School, the safety of the children is paramount and, with that in mind, this policy has been created in order to safeguard everyone.

We believe that the use of the Social Media such as Facebook and Instagram is an integral part of 21st century life. As such, it is our duty to ensure that appropriate and safe use of Social Media should be taught in school. It can also be an effective way of communicating instantly with parents and raises the profile of all the good things that are happening in school.

The school currently uses its own website for information and to promote events and we are developing our use of social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) as a more immediate way of communicating with parents.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or whereby new or emerging technology not mentioned, are used in school. It is expected that in these circumstances staff in schools will always advise the head teacher in the first instance.

Aims & Objectives

At Kintbury St. Mary's Church of England Primary School we aim to:

- enable children to navigate social media in a safe manner;
- promote responsible usage of social media;
- help children grow into reliable, independent, and positive e-citizens.
- Set clear expectations of behaviour and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal, or recreational use
- Set safer working practices.
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children

Scope

This document applies to all staff and Governors who work in Kintbury St. Mary's Church of England Primary School and parents of children who attend the school and all contractors, visitors and volunteers.

Links to other policy

The policy should not be read in isolation, but in line with our other policy including E-safety, Antibullying, Complaints, Child Protection Policy, and Behaviour policies.

Safer Social Media Practice in Schools

What is social media? For the purpose of this policy, 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. Social networking websites, such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, are perhaps the most well-known examples of social media. The term also covers other web-based services such as blogs, video and audio podcasts, wikis, message boards, photo document and video sharing websites such as YouTube and micro blogging services such as X. This definition of social media is not exhaustive as technology develops with new ways of communicating advancing every day. In this document, the terminology Social Media, is not exhaustive. It applies to the use of communication technologies such as mobile phones, cameras, PDAs / PSPs, watches or other handheld devices and any other emerging forms of communications technologies.

Expectations of Staff

- All staff must follow the procedures set down in this policy.
- All staff are expected to uphold public trust and to maintain reasonable standards in their own behaviour. This includes the use of social media sites.
- School staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour, during their use of the internet and other communication technologies, which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential. Social media provides the opportunity to celebrate our successes and portray our school is a positive light. If staff have a particular issue they wish to raise with the school or local authority this must be done through the normal procedures.

Expectations of Parents and Carers:

- The posting of photos, videos or comments on their personal social media must not include other children at the school.
- Parents and Carers must not use social media on their personal devices while on the school premises.
- All adults must not access social media while volunteering at school or during school trips or visits.
- We ask that Parents and Carers raise all queries, concerns, or complaints directly with the school rather than posting on social media.
- Parents and Carers need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. No malicious posts about the school or anyone in the school community should be posted or shared on social networking sites.

Expectations of Children:

- Children are not permitted to join social networking sites if they are below the permitted age restriction (13 years of age for Facebook, What's App, Instagram).

Safer online behavior

- Managing personal information effectively makes it far less likely that information will be misused.
- In their own interests, staff need to be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers. This will avoid the potential for children or their families or friends having access to staff outside of the school environment. It also reduces the potential for identity theft by third parties.
- All staff, particularly new staff, should review their social networking sites when they join the school to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate. This includes any photographs that may cause embarrassment to themselves and the school if they are published outside of the site.
- Staff should never 'friend' or accept an invitation to 'friend' a child, ex-pupil or parent at the school where they are working onto their social networking site. Any such request should be explicitly rejected and not just ignored.
- Staff should never use or access social networking sites of pupils, ex-pupils or parents
- There will be occasions when there are social contacts between pupils, parents and staff, where for example the parent and teacher are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.
- Confidentiality must always be considered. Social networking sites have the potential to discuss inappropriate information. Employees must ensure that they do not put any confidential information on their site about themselves, their employer, their colleagues, children or members of the public.

- Employees must ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other employees, children or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, or local council, could result in formal action being taken against them.
- Some social networking sites and other web-based sites have fields in the user profile for job title etc. If you are an employee of a school and particularly if you are a teacher, you should not put any information onto the site that could identify either your profession or the school where you work.

Protection of personal information

- Staff should keep their personal phone numbers private and not use their own mobile phones to contact pupils or parents except when express permission is given or an emergency arises (e.g school trip).
- Staff should never share their work log-ins or passwords with other people.
- Staff should not give their personal e-mail addresses to pupils or parents.
- Staff are advised to understand who is allowed to view the content on their pages of the sites they use and how to restrict access to certain groups of people.

Communication between pupils / school staff

- Communication between children, parents and staff should be within the official channels set out by the school.
- It is recognised that social media presents an opportunity to celebrate successes and portray the school in a positive light. Parents and pupils who wish to communicate with the school this must be done through the normal channels and will be dealt with under the normal school procedures.

KSM's use of social media

- At Kintbury St Mary's CofE Primary School we will be using Facebook and Instagram social media platforms, to share the learning of our pupils, to communicate with our school community and wider schools' community, and to promote our school.
- When using social media platforms, the school will ensure that all images used on social media are of children that have signed the photograph and video agreement form.
- The school will ensure that all social media posts do not contain information about individual children

Reporting Concerns

- We will not tolerate any form of bullying using social media. Nor will we tolerate any comments or posts that are defamatory, rude, or abusive, towards any member of our school community, whether that be children, parents, staff, or governors.
- If any member of our community has concerns over something that has been posted online by a parent, child or member of staff, then they should advise the Headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. This will be dealt with under normal school procedures. The school will ban and report anyone who breaks the terms of service for a social media platform.

Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying can be defined as 'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them.'
- The school promotes a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying, whether it is to a child or member of staff.
- If cyberbullying does take place involving a child, the school will follow its procedure outlined in the anti-bullying policy.

- If cyberbullying does take place to a member of staff, the employee should keep records of the abuse, text, e-mails, website or instant message and should not delete texts or e-mails. Employees are advised to take screen prints of messages or web pages and be careful to record the time, date and place of the site. Staff may wish to seek the support of their trade union or professional association representatives or another colleague to support.

Safer Working Practices

This guidance should be read with the school's e-safety policy. It is important that staff consider Safer Working Practices at all times. When recording either images or videos for school, this should be done using school equipment. No image or recording should be kept on personal equipment.