



# ST EGWIN'S C.E. MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Social Media Policy

Updated September 2022  
Review date October 2023

Headteacher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Williams'.

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## **1. About this policy**

- 1.1 This policy is in place to minimise the risks to St Egwin’s CE Middle School through use of social media.
- 1.2 This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp and Snapchat and all other social networking sites, internet postings, blogs and chat apps. It applies to use of social media for business purposes as well as personal use that may affect our school in any way.
- 1.3 This policy covers all learners, parents/carers, staff and Governors.
- 1.4 This policy ensures that St Egwin’s maintains their duty to safeguard children, the reputation of the school and those who work for it and the wider community.
- 1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.
- 1.6 References to “students” throughout this policy shall mean students other than the staff member’s own child or relation.

## **2. Personnel responsible for implementing the policy**

- 2.1 The headteacher has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
- 2.2 The headteacher has a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.
- 2.3 All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to a DSL or Headteacher. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to a DSL.

## **3. Compliance with related policies and agreements**

- 3.1 Social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, you are prohibited from using social media to:
  - (a) breach our IT / online policies and procedures;
  - (b) breach our Code of Conduct;
  - (c) breach our Disciplinary Policy or procedures;
  - (d) breach our Anti-bullying Policy;
  - (e) breach our Equal Opportunities Policy;
  - (f) breach our Data Protection Policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague or student online);

- (g) breach any other laws or regulatory requirements.
- 3.2 Staff who breach any of the above policies could be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- 3.3 Staff should never provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites, as such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to St Egwin's CE Middle School and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school.
- 3.4 Staff must make themselves aware of and act in accordance with their duties under the Keeping children safe in Education 2022: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges these relate to:
  - their own on-line activity
  - the on-line activity of students and other colleagues and
  - information of which they become aware of on-line including their duties relating to Children Missing from Education, Child Sexual Exploitation, FGM and Preventing Radicalisation (Prevent).

#### **4. Personal use of social media**

- 4.1 Staff must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the school's reputation, even indirectly.
- 4.2 Staff must not use social media to defame or disparage the school, our staff, students, parents/carers or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against students, parents/carers, staff or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.
- 4.3 Staff must not express opinions on the school's behalf via social media.
- 4.4 Staff should not accept students as friends or use social media to send any personal messages to them directly or indirectly. There may be circumstances where parents/carers are accepted as friends. Staff should be very cautious when doing this. Never enter into social media dialogue with parent/carers or similar over a school related issue, the correct grievance procedures should be followed at all times. Personal communication could be considered inappropriate and unprofessional and may put you and/or your colleagues vulnerable to allegations.
- 4.5 Staff are strongly advised not to be friends (on or off line) with recent students. Staff at St Egwin's are also strongly advised not to be friends with students at other schools (on or off line) as this is likely to make them vulnerable to allegations and may be open to investigation.
- 4.6 Staff must not share any personal information with any student (including personal contact details, personal website addresses/social networking site details) and ensure good safeguarding practice;
- 4.7 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

it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.

- 4.8 All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media sites. This will include (but is not limited to):
- (a) Setting the privacy levels of their personal sites.
  - (b) Being aware of location sharing services.
  - (c) Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
  - (d) Logging out of accounts after use.
  - (e) Keeping passwords safe and confidential.
  - (f) Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as that of St Egwin's CE Middle School.
- 4.9 You must not post or share photographs of students on social networking sites without the agreement of the Headteacher
- 4.10 Any misuse of social media should be reported to the DSL / Headteacher. This could be done as a low level concern.
- 4.11 Members of staff who follow and/or like our official social media channels will be advised to use dedicated professional accounts, where possible, to avoid blurring professional boundaries.
- 4.12 If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:
- (a) Sign our social media acceptable use policy.
  - (b) Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the school.
  - (c) Disclose their official role but make it clear that they do not necessarily speak on behalf of the school.
  - (d) Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
  - (e) Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including: libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
  - (f) Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
  - (g) Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school, unless they are authorised to do so.
  - (h) Not engage with any direct or private messaging with current, or past, learners, parents and carers.
  - (i) Inform their line manager, the DSL and/or the headteacher of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from learners.

- 4.13 Staff should make it clear in social media postings, or in their personal profile, that they are speaking on your own behalf. Write in the first person and use a personal e-mail address.
- 4.14 If staff disclose your affiliation on your profile or in any social media postings, you must state that your views do not represent those of your employer. You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to the St Egwin's community and its staff.
- 4.15 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 St Egwin's and your personal interests.
- 4.16 Be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that you are personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see.
- 4.17 All communication via social networking sites should be made with the awareness that anything said, shown or received could be made available, intentionally or otherwise, to an audience wider than that originally intended (social networking sites are public forums). You are strongly advised, in your own interests, to take steps to ensure as far as possible that your on-line personal data is not accessible to anybody who you do not want to have permission to access it. For example, you are strongly advised to check the security and privacy settings of any social networking site you subscribe to and set these to maximum and, where relevant, use strong passwords and change them regularly.
- 4.18 If you see social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on us, you should contact the Headteacher.

## **5. Business use of social media**

- 5.1 There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, the School and some departments and individual staff have St Egwin's Twitter accounts for the purposes of their employment. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning.
- 5.2 There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school social media sites. Staff must not create sites unnecessarily or for trivial reasons which could expose the School to unwelcome publicity or cause reputational damage. As a guideline, we would expect accounts to be limited to one department account and one individual staff member account per social media provider. Staff should remember that the greater the number of accounts the greater the risk to School of those accounts being "hacked".
- 5.3 When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:
  - (a) Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and ideally should be linked to an official school email account;

- (b) The URL and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate member of the Leadership / IT Team before any account is activated;
- (c) The current password or login details for all social media accounts must be provided to the IT team who will retain a record of such information;
- (d) The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school;
- (e) Staff must ensure that St Egwin's has parent/carer consent to use, post or publish a photograph or video image of the student. Please see 1.39 below in respect of parent/carer consent;
- (f) Staff must ensure that they do not identify a student using their full name. Only first/forenames or initials may be used without express parent/carer permission;
- (g) Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe;
- (h) Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of school-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of the Leadership Team;
- (i) Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public;
- (j) Staff should not seek to view/link up with /view student accounts. For example, in the case of Twitter, staff should not "follow back" those who follow, share or like St Egwin's comments/posts.

5.4 The failure to follow the rules set out in clause 1.36 (c) may give rise to disciplinary action.

## **6. Students' Personal Use of Social Media**

- 6.1 Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to learners as part of an embedded and progressive education approach, via age appropriate sites and resources.
- 6.2 We are aware that many popular social media sites state that they are not for children under the age of 13, therefore we will not create accounts specifically for learners under this age.
- 6.3 Any concerns regarding learners use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour.
  - (a) Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools.
- 6.4 Students will be advised:
  - (a) To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
  - (b) To only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.
  - (c) Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.

- (d) To use safe passwords.
- (e) To use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
- (f) How to block and report unwanted communications.
- (g) How to report concerns both within the setting and externally.

The use of social media is expressly forbidden by pupils in school unless a member of SLT has agreed to its use.

The posting of any photo, recording on social media taken on school site or from a St Egwin's platform will be treated with the utmost seriousness. Police may be informed and the posting will be reported.

### **7. Parent/carer consent**

- 7.1 On admission to the school, parents/carers are asked whether they give their permission for the school to use photographs and video images of their child for school related purposes. Parents/carers will have the right to withdraw this consent at any point.
- 7.2 St Egwin's CE Middle School retains a list of those parents/carers who have objected to or who have placed any restrictions or limitations on the use of images of their child. Staff should familiarise themselves with the names of the students on that list. It is a disciplinary offence to use, post or publish a photograph or video image of a student contrary to the instructions of their parent/carer.

### **8. Monitoring**

- 8.1 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, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.
- 8.2 In the event of any member of staff noticing anything detrimental to the reputation of St Egwin's they should not reply in person but immediately pass on the information to the Headteacher.
- 8.3 We have Smoothwall to monitor use of technology in school. The DSL receives a report weekly.

### **9. Recruitment**

- 9.1 We may use social media to advertise vacancies within school. Such advertisements will be prepared and posted by the admin team.
- 9.2 As part of our recruitment policy we may do an online search for shortlisted candidates. This may include social media sites



## **10. Breach of this policy**

- 10.1 Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.
- 10.2 You may be required to remove any social media content that we consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action.

Other related policies can be found on our school website:

Safeguarding and child protection policy

Behaviour Policy

Peer on Peer abuse

Staff Code of Conduct

Online Safety Policy

Anti-Bullying (including Cyberbullying)

Healthy Relationships (SRE)

ICT and Internet Acceptable Use policy