



Social Media & Networking Policy

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1. Purpose:

The purpose of this social media policy is to provide guidelines for the appropriate and responsible use of social media platforms by the primary school community, including students, teachers, staff, and parents.

Beckstone Primary (hereafter referred to as 'school') is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. Including but not limited to; WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat X-Box Live, Twitter and Tik Tok– this list is not exhaustive and school recognises that this is a constantly changing canvas.

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

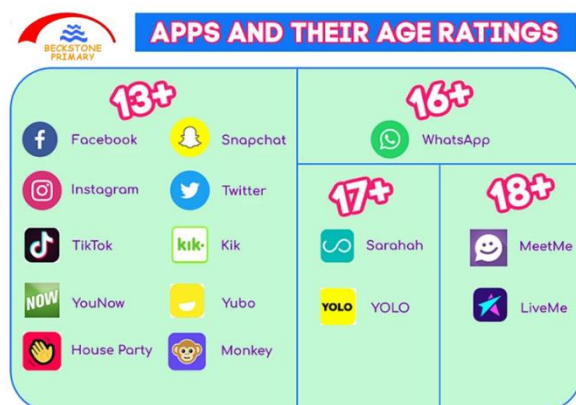
This policy aims to ensure the safety, privacy, and well-being of all individuals involved while promoting positive digital citizenship.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

The key drivers of this policy are to ensure:

- That school's Safeguarding policy and procedures are upheld
- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- Legal restrictions on age are reinforced by the school
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected and our school ethos is upheld
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

Published age limits for popular social media / networking sites. Correct as of April 2023



2. Scope

This policy applies to all social media activities conducted on behalf of the primary school, as well as personal social media use that may impact the school community.

All school community users (staff, parents & pupils) should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

3. Responsible Use:

a. Students:

- Students must use social media platforms they can legally access responsibly and respectfully, adhering to the school's code of conduct.
- Sharing personal information, such as full names, addresses, or contact information, is strictly prohibited.
- Students should not engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or any form of disrespectful behaviour towards others.
- Students must respect copyright laws and intellectual property rights when posting or sharing content.
- Posting or sharing inappropriate, offensive, or illegal content is strictly prohibited.
- Students should report any concerns, such as cyberbullying or inappropriate content, to a trusted adult or school staff member.

b. Teachers and Staff:

- Teachers and staff should maintain professional boundaries and avoid personal relationships with students on social media platforms.
- Personal social media accounts should be set to private to protect personal information.
- Teachers and staff should not post or share content that may negatively impact their professional reputation or the reputation of the school.
- Confidential and sensitive information related to students, families, or the school should never be shared on social media.

c. Parents:

- Parents should be mindful of their social media activities and the potential impact on the school community.
- Parents should never post negative criticisms of the school and should report any concerns/issues they have to school rather than resort to social media.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of other students, parents, and school staff members.
- Parents should communicate any concerns or issues related to social media use to the school.

4. Terms of Use for staff

5.

Social Networking applications:

- Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
- Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies
- Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with
- Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally affects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.
- Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

The School's ethos and safeguarding policy must be upheld at all times.

Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites.
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18 years.
- This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.
- It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child.
- If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the DSL, Debbie Cook, in school.
- It is good practice for confidentiality reasons for staff not to befriend current parents on social media sites.

Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

- **No pupil under 13** should be accessing social networking sites.
- No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day
- Mobile phones are not permitted in school. Any pupils with mobile phones must hand them into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off.
- No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens
- No school computers are to be used to access social networking 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

- Pupils must report any improper contact or cyber bullying to an adult at home or your class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- We have a zero tolerance towards cyber bullying

Child protection guidance

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy
- Schools must refer the matter to the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes
- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.
- If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out.

Cyber Bullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Beckstone Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social; networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

6. Promotion of Positive Digital Citizenship:

a. Education:

- The school will provide education and awareness programs regarding responsible social media use, online safety, and digital citizenship.
- Students, teachers, staff, and parents will be encouraged to participate in these programs to promote a culture of responsible digital behaviour.

b. Monitoring and Reporting:

- The school reserves the right to monitor social media platforms to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Any violations of this policy should be reported to the school for appropriate action.

c. Consequences for Policy Violations:

- Violations of this policy in school may result in disciplinary action, which could include educational interventions, loss of social media privileges, or other appropriate consequences.
- Any issues arising from pupil misuse of social media sites they are legally too young to use that spill over into school will result in an immediate suspension for all involved. Parents will be informed of this policy. It is not the role of the school to investigate illegal use of these sites, it is parents' responsibility if they have let their children access them.

7. Review and Modification

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Any necessary modifications will be made to address emerging trends, technologies, or legal requirements.

By adhering to this social media policy, we can create a safe, respectful, and positive online environment for all members of our primary school community.