



Brown's School Social Media Policy



<u>Full Name of Policy</u>	Social Media Policy
<u>Date of Approval</u>	September 2021
<u>Date of Next Formal Review</u>	September 2022



Introduction

With the growing use of technology and social media, all staff should adopt a much more sophisticated approach to their safeguarding responsibilities. They need to reflect on the changing nature of communication and how this impacts on safeguarding issues, particularly those focused on the identification and assessment of potential risk. To do this successfully, staff need to recognise that children and young people do not use technology and social media in isolation. Their offline and online worlds are converged and both need to be understood when trying to identify the type of support that a child or young person and their family might need. A robust safeguarding process should always give consideration to how offline vulnerabilities might be reflected in a child's online behaviour and vice versa.

New technologies are an integral part of our lives and are widespread powerful tools which bring new communication opportunities in teaching and learning for pupils and staff in many ways. It is important that staff are able to use these technologies and services effectively but that this should be balanced with protecting our professional reputation and integrity. With this in mind, all staff working with pupils have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard their welfare, and to behave in the best interests of the pupils and the school that they work for.

This policy takes into account the DfE statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (including updates in February 2019 and December 2020) and the local Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and procedures 2017.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's E-safety, Child Protection, Anti-bullying and Behaviour policies and any other related procedures, for example the Code of Conduct and the staff handbook. If staff fail to adhere to the guidelines set out in this Social Media Policy, their conduct could be called into question and may result in disciplinary action being taken against them which could ultimately lead to their dismissal.

For the purpose of the policy, social media sites are websites by which personal information or opinions can be presented for public consumption and websites which allow people to interact with each other. The term 'social media' may include (but is not limited to) blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chat rooms and instant messenger. Examples of social media and social networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube and Snapchat. Please note that this list is not exhaustive as new technology is emerging on a daily basis but it seeks to provide examples to staff. The definition of social media may be increased as new technologies emerge.

Policy Aims

- ∞ The purpose of Brown's School's Social Media Policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of the school's community when using social media on site and at home.
- ∞ Brown's School recognises that online safety is an essential part of safeguarding and acknowledges its duty to ensure that all pupils and staff are protected from potential harm when using social media.
- ∞ Brown's School identifies that mobile devices, such as computers, tablets, mobile phones, smart watches and games consoles, and social media, are an important part of everyday life, which present positive and exciting opportunities, as well as challenges and risks.
- ∞ Brown's School will empower its pupils to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful way and develop resilience so that they can manage and respond to online risks.
- ∞ This document applies to all staff who work in the school, including the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Governing Body, teachers, support staff, external contractors, visitors, volunteers and other individuals who work for, or provide services on behalf of the school. These will be collectively referred to as 'staff'.



Monitoring and Review

- ∞ As technology evolves and changes rapidly, Brown's School will review this policy annually, but will revise it following any national or local policy requirements, any child protection concerns or any changes to the technical infrastructure.
- ∞ The school will regularly monitor internet use and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is constantly applied.
- ∞ The Headteacher will be informed of any online safety concerns to ensure oversight of online safety.
- ∞ Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.

Responding to Policy Breaches

- ∞ All members of the school community will be made aware of how the school will monitor policy compliance through Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs), staff training and classroom management.
- ∞ All members of the school community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing school policies and procedures.
- ∞ All members of the school community will respect confidentiality.
- ∞ Pupils, parents and staff will be informed of our complaints procedures and staff will be made aware of the whistleblowing procedure.
- ∞ The school requires pupils, staff and parents to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.
- ∞ If appropriate, after any investigations are completed, the SLT will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any policy or curriculum changes, as required.
- ∞ Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the school will contact the police using 101, or 999 if there is an immediate danger or risk of harm.

Guidelines for Staff in Relation to Pupil Use of Social Media

- ∞ All members of the school community need to be aware that the internet has social networks which allow individuals to publish unmediated content. Pupils should be encouraged to think about the ease of uploading personal information, the associated dangers and the difficulty of removing an inappropriate image or information once published.
- ∞ All staff should be made aware of the potential risks of using social networking sites or personal publishing either professionally with pupils or personally.
- ∞ Pupils will be taught to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful way and develop resilience so that they can manage and respond to online risks. This will be done through the curriculum in ICT and PSHE lessons and also through explicit 1:1 /small group teaching by the school's therapy team and pastoral care team.
 - Pupils do not have access to unsupervised social media sites during the school day. However, staff acknowledge that social media use is widespread outside of school and therefore pupils will be advised:
 - to never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them and/or their location.
 - to use nicknames and avatars when using social networking sites.
 - to only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to other by making profiles private.
 - not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other appropriate adult's permission and to only do so when a trusted adult is present.
 - to use safe passwords.
 - to use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
 - how to block and report unwanted communications.
 - how to report concerns on social media, both in and outside of school.
 - to be respectful and considerate towards others at all times.



- ∞ Staff wishing to use social media tools with students as part of the curriculum will risk assess the sites before use and check the sites' terms and conditions to ensure the site is age appropriate. Staff will obtain documented consent from the SLT in this scenario.
- ∞ Newsgroups will be blocked unless a specific use is approved by the SLT.
- ∞ Parents will be advised that the use of social media sites outside school brings a risk of dangers for young and vulnerable groups.
- ∞ Personal publishing will be taught via age appropriate sites that are suitable for educational purposes and are moderated by staff.
- ∞ Pupils are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, especially those that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory.
- ∞ Staff will report any concerns regarding a pupil's use of social media to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures.
- ∞ Any concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including Anti-bullying, Child Protection and Behaviour.
- ∞ The DSLs will respond to online safety concerns involving safeguarding or child protection risks in line with the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- ∞ Pastoral support will be implemented and offered to pupils as appropriate.
- ∞ Concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, including underage use of social media services and games.
- ∞ Any reports of online sexual abuse or sexual harassment on social media sites will be reported to the police and/or Children's Social Care (CSC).

Staff Guidelines in Relation to their Own Social Media Activity

- ∞ The safe and responsible personal use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites by staff will be discussed as part of staff meetings.
- ∞ The use of social media during school hours for personal use is permitted for staff during lunchtimes and breaktimes only – never in the classroom.
- ∞ If staff wish to have a social media presence, please make sure that Brown's School is not identified on this presence.
- ∞ Staff are personally responsible for their communication on social media. This includes any media attachments like photographs or videos. What staff publish on a social media site will be available for any member of the public to read (including parents of our pupils, colleagues, members of the Local Authority and prospective employers) for a long time. Staff should always think carefully about this when posting personal content.
- ∞ Staff will not post any media attachments such as photographs or videos which have subjects (pupils/colleagues etc) of the school in them. If you wish to post such items you should always speak to the Headteacher in the first instance.



- ∞ Staff will not place any information regarding their employer, their colleagues, or people they come into contact with as part of their employment on a social media site in a working situation.
- ∞ Members of staff will notify the Headteacher immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.
- ∞ Staff are advised for their own protection to use privacy settings and not to put personal information such as home addresses or personal telephone numbers on a social media site.
- ∞ All staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the school.
- ∞ Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or school into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- ∞ Any allegations regarding a member of staff's social media conduct will be reported to the Headteacher and discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Concerns about the Headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors, Ms Sarah Mortiboys: sarahmortiboys@brownsschool.co.uk.

Staff Guidelines in Relation to Pupil Contact

- ∞ Staff will not interact with any pupil (or past pupil under the age of 18) of the school on a social media or networking site. For example, the school would not think it appropriate for staff to 'friend' a pupil or request that a pupil 'friend' them.
- ∞ Any electronic communication regarding the school or the work you are carrying out in the school (including telephone and text messaging contact) with pupils or parents/carers should only take place using the school's formal communication systems. Staff should only use the school's website; the school's e-mail address or the school's telephone number when communicating with pupils and parents/carers.
- ∞ Staff will not post remarks or comments on-line or engage in online activities which may bring the school into disrepute.

Social Media Sites and Cyberbullying

- ∞ Staff will undertake never to use social media to abuse or bully or otherwise comment about colleagues, pupils, parents/carers of the pupils or anyone associated in the wider context of the school (e.g. Local Authority, outside agencies etc). Staff are expected to act respectfully when using social media and to avoid language which may be deemed as offensive to other people. For example, the school would not expect you to:
 - post anything that could be construed as discriminatory
 - post anything that could be construed as racist
 - post anything that is untrue or misleading
 - post anything that engages in criminal activity
 - post anything that is defamatory about people or organisations



- ∞ Staff who feel that they are subject to social media bullying by another member of staff or a pupil should, where possible, save evidence (e.g. e-mails, screen prints, text messages) and immediately report this to the Headteacher for further investigation. Concerns about the Headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

- ∞ Staff who feel that a colleague is not adhering to this policy should report their concerns to the Headteacher for further investigation. Concerns about the Headteacher should be referred to the Chair of Governors.

Reviewed in Staff Meeting

Person responsible for editing: Jeanette May in September 2021

_____ **Signature**

_____ **Date**

_____ **Headteacher**

_____ **Date**

This policy will be reviewed in September 2022