

Pathway Schools Ltd

Social Media Policy

Statement of intent

Pathway Schools Ltd understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our students against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our students about how to protect themselves online when outside of school.

We are committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents and students in support of the school's mission, values and objectives.
- Protecting our students from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.
- Arranging online safety meetings for parents.

Date policy last reviewed: November 25

Date for next review: November 26

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1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) 'Data protection in schools'
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented by the school.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
- Ensuring their own knowledge of social media and online safety issues is up-to-date.
- Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including against any of the protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and students are aware of their responsibilities in relation to social media use.
- Promoting safer working practices and standards with regards to the use of social media.
- Establishing clear expectations of behaviour for social media use.
- In conjunction with the governing board, handling complaints regarding this policy and its provisions in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Implementing appropriate sanctions and disciplinary methods where there is a breach of this policy.
- Taking steps to minimise the amount of misplaced or malicious allegations in relation to social media use.
- Working alongside the DPO and ICT technicians to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR and other data protection legislation.

The DSL will be responsible for:

- The school's approach to online safety.
- Dealing with concerns about social media use that are safeguarding concerns.

Staff members will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Device and Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff.
- Ensuring students adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.

- Reporting any social media misuse by staff, students or parents to the headteacher immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home.
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both themselves and their children.
- Attending meetings held by the school regarding social media use wherever possible.

Students will be responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Ensuring they understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online.
- Seeking help from school staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced on social media.
- Reporting incidents and concerns relating to social media in line with the procedures within this policy.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.

The marketing officer will be responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing all school-run social media accounts.
- Vetting and approving individuals who wish to be 'friends' or 'followers' on the school's social media platforms.
- Consulting with staff on the purpose of the social media account and the content published.
- Maintaining a log of inappropriate comments or abuse relating to the school.
- Handling inappropriate comments or abuse posted on the school's social media accounts, or regarding the school.
- Creating a terms of use agreement, which all content published must be in accordance with.
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up-to-date and relevant.

ICT technicians will be responsible for:

- Providing technical support in the development and implementation of the school's social media accounts.
- Implementing appropriate security measures as directed by the headteacher.
- Ensuring that the school's filtering and monitoring systems are updated as appropriate.

3. School social media accounts

Social media accounts for the school will only be created by the marketing officer and other designated staff members, following approval from the headteacher. A school-based social media account will be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by staff members and will be linked to an official school email account.

When setting up a school social media account, consideration will be given to the following:

- The purpose of the account
- Whether the overall investment will achieve the aim of the account
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether students, staff, parents or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account

- How much time and effort staff members are willing to commit to the account
- How the success of the account will be evaluated

The headteacher will be responsible for authorising members of staff and any other individual to have admin access to school social media accounts. Only people authorised by the headteacher will be allowed to post on the school's accounts.

Passwords for the school's social media accounts are stored securely [on the school's ICT network](#). The passwords are only shared with people authorised by the headteacher.

All posts made to school social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.

The school's social media accounts will comply with the platform's rules. The marketing officer will ensure anyone with authorisation to post on the school's social media accounts are provided with training on the platform and the rules around what can be posted.

School social media accounts will be moderated by the marketing officer or another designated member of staff.

Staff conduct

Only staff with authorisation from the headteacher will post on school accounts and they will adhere to the School Social Media Accounts – Terms of Use Agreement.

Staff will get content approved by the marketing officer before it is posted. Staff will only post content that meets the school's social media objectives, including the following:

- Reminders about upcoming events
- Good news regarding the school's performance, attainment or reputation
- Good news regarding the achievements of staff and students
- Information that parents should be aware of, e.g. school closure

Staff will ensure that their posts meet the following criteria:

- The post does not risk bringing the school into disrepute
- The post only expresses neutral opinions and does not include any personal views
- The post uses appropriate and school-friendly language
- The post is sensitive towards those who will read it, and uses particularly neutral and sensitive language when discussing something that may be controversial to some
- The post does not contain any wording or content that could be construed as offensive
- The post does not take a side in any political debate or express political opinions
- The post does not contain any illegal or unlawful content

4. Staff use of personal social media

Staff will not be prohibited from having personal social media accounts; however, it is important that staff protect their professional reputation by ensuring they use personal social media accounts in an appropriate manner.

Staff will be required to adhere to the following guidelines when using personal social media accounts:

- Staff members will not access personal social media platforms during school hours.
- Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts.
- Staff will not 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact students through their personal social media accounts. If students attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member, they will report this to the headteacher.
- Staff will be strongly advised to not 'friend' or 'follow' parents on their personal accounts.
- Staff members will ensure the necessary privacy controls are applied to personal accounts and will avoid identifying themselves as an employee of the school on their personal social media accounts.

- Staff will ensure it is clear that views posted on personal accounts are personal and are not those of the school.
- Staff will not post any content online that is damaging to the school, its staff or students.
- Staff members will not post any information which could identify a student, class or the school – this includes any images, videos and personal information.
- Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- Staff will not post comments about the school, students, parents, staff or other members of the school community.

Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal. Members of staff will be aware that if their out-of-work activity brings the school into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken. Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community via social media by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

5. Parent use of social media

Parents are able to comment on or respond to information shared via social media sites; however, parents should do so in a way which does not damage the reputation of the school.

Parents will be asked not to share any photos or personal details of students when commenting on school social media sites, nor post comments concerning other students or staff members.

Any parents that are seen to be breaching the guidance in this policy will be required to attend a meeting with the headteacher, and may have their ability to interact with the social media websites removed.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution.

6. Student use of social media

Students will not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity. Students will not be permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access any social media platforms unless prior permission has been sought from the headteacher, and an ICT technician has ensured appropriate network security measures are applied.

Students will not attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Where a student attempts to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the headteacher.

Students will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or students.

Students will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Students are instructed not to sign up to any social media platforms that have an age restriction above the student's age.

If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, this will be reported to a member of staff.

Breaches of this policy will be taken seriously, and managed in line with the Behaviour Policy.

7. Data protection principles

The school will obtain consent from students and parents at the beginning of each academic year using the Social media consent form, which will confirm whether or not consent is given for posting images and videos of a student on social media platforms. The consent will be valid for the entire academic year. Consent provided for the use of images and videos only applies to school accounts – staff, students and parents are not permitted to post any imagery or videos on personal accounts.

Where a student is assessed by the school to have the competence to understand what they are consenting to, the school will obtain consent directly from that student; otherwise, consent is obtained from whoever holds parental responsibility for the student.

A record of consent is maintained throughout the academic year, which details the students for whom consent has been provided. The DPO will be responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.

Parents and students are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents and students must inform the school in writing. Where parents or students withdraw or amend their consent, it will not affect the processing of any images or videos prior to when consent was withdrawn or amended. Processing will cease in line with parents' and students' requirements following this. Wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, the school will take measures to remove any posts before consent was withdrawn or amended, such as removing an image from a social media site.

Consent can be provided for certain principles only, for example only images of a student are permitted to be posted, and not videos. This will be made explicitly clear on the consent form provided. The school will only post images and videos of students for whom consent has been received.

Only school-owned devices will be used to take images and videos of the school community, which have been pre-approved by the online safety officer for use. Only appropriate images and videos of students will be posted in which they are suitably dressed, e.g. it would not be suitable to display an image of a student in swimwear.

When posting on social media, the school will use group or class images or videos with general labels, e.g. 'sports day'.

When posting images and videos of students, the school will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of a student being identified. The school will not post students' personal details on social media platforms and students' full names will never be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent record log to ensure consent has been received for that student and for the exact processing activities required.
- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a student.

8. Safeguarding

Any disclosures made by students to staff about online abuse, harassment or exploitation, whether they are the victim or disclosing on behalf of another child, will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Concerns regarding a staff member's online behaviour will be reported to the headteacher, who will decide on the best course of action in line with the relevant policies, e.g. the Staff Code of Conduct, Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Appendix within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. If the concern is about the headteacher, it will be reported to the chair of governors.

Concerns regarding a student's online behaviour will be reported to the DSL, who will investigate any concerns with relevant staff members, e.g. the headteacher and ICT technicians, and manage concerns in accordance with relevant policies depending on their nature, e.g. the Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where there is a concern that illegal activity has taken place, the headteacher will contact the police. The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising students, e.g. calling the police, where criminal behaviour is thought to be inadvertent and as a result of ignorance or normal developmental curiosity, e.g. a student has

taken and distributed indecent imagery of themselves. The DSL will decide in which cases this response is appropriate and will manage such cases in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

As part of the usual communication with parents, the school will reinforce the importance of students being safe online and inform parents what systems the school uses to filter and monitor online use. The school will also make it clear to parents what their children are being asked to do online for school, including what platforms they will be asked to access and who from the school, if anyone, they will be interacting with online.

9. Blocked content

In accordance with the school's Cyber-security Policy, the online safety officer will install firewalls on the school's network to prevent access to certain websites. The following social media websites are not accessible on the school's network:

- [X](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)

ICT technicians retain the right to monitor staff and student access to websites when using the school's network and on school-owned devices.

Attempts made to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment, other than with close supervision.

Inappropriate content accessed on the school's computers will be reported to an ICT technician so that the site can be blocked. Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by submitting a blocked content access form to an ICT technician, which will be approved by the headteacher.

10. Cyberbullying

Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by students will be handled in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.

Cyberbullying against students or staff is not tolerated under any circumstances. Incidents of cyberbullying are dealt with quickly and effectively wherever they occur in line with the Anti-bullying Policy. Allegations of cyberbullying from staff members will be handled in accordance with the Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy.

11. Training

The school recognises that early intervention can protect students who may be at risk of cyberbullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk students. Staff will receive training on social media as part of their new starter induction. Staff will receive termly and ongoing training as part of their development.

Students will be educated about online safety and appropriate social media use on a termly basis through a variety of mediums, including PSHE lessons and cross-curricular links. Students will be provided with material to reinforce their knowledge.

Parents will be invited to online safety and social media training on an annual basis and provided with relevant resources.

Training for all students, staff and parents will be refreshed in light of any significant incidents or changes.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and governing board.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, students and parents.

Blocked content access request form

Requester	
Staff name	
Date	
Full URL	
Site content	
Reasons for access	
Identified risks and control measures	
Authoriser	
Approved?	
Reasons	
Staff name	
Date	
Signature	

Inappropriate content report form

Staff name (submitting report)	
Name of individual accessing inappropriate content (if known)	
Date	
Full URL(s)	
Nature of inappropriate content	
To be completed by ICT technician	

Action taken	
Staff name	
Date	
Signature	

Social media site creation approval form

Use of social media on behalf of the school must be approved by the headteacher prior to setting up sites. Please complete this form and return it to the headteacher.

Team details		
Department		
Moderator of site		
Purpose of using social media		
Please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site		
What are your aims and what do you hope to achieve by setting up this site?		
What is the proposed content of the site?		
Proposed audience of the site		
<input type="checkbox"/> Students of the school Ages: age range	<input type="checkbox"/> School staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Students' family members
<input type="checkbox"/> External organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Students from other schools Schools involved: Pathway Schools Ltd	<input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)		
Proposed contributors to the site		
<input type="checkbox"/> Students of the school Ages: age range	<input type="checkbox"/> School staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Students' family members
<input type="checkbox"/> External organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Students from other schools Schools involved: Pathway Schools Ltd	<input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)		

Administration of the site		
Names of administrators (the site must have at least two approved administrators)		
Who will vet external contributors? (Please state name and job role)		
Who will host the site?		
Proposed date of going live		
How do you propose to advertise for contributors?		
If contributors include students, how do you propose to inform and obtain the consent of parents or responsible adults?		
What security measures will you take to prevent unwanted or unsuitable individuals from contributing or becoming 'friends' and 'followers' etc. of the site?		
Approval		
Approval from relevant people must be obtained before the site can be created. The relevant managers must read this form and complete the information below before final approval can be given by the headteacher.		
Marketing officer I approve the aims and content of the proposed site and the use of the school brand and logo.	Name	
	Signature	
	Date	
Headteacher I approve the aims and content of the proposed site and the use of the school brand and logo.	Name	
	Signature	
	Date	

Social media consent

This consent form provides information pertaining to how Pathway Schools Ltd wishes to use personal data on social media, details the terms under which the school will use this data and requests consent for the school to use your personal data on social media.

Name of parent	
Name of student	
Year group	

Why do we need your consent?

The school requests the consent of parents on an annual basis to use images and videos of their child for a variety of different purposes.

Without your consent, the school will not use images, videos, names or other forms of personal data of your child on social media. Similarly, if there are only certain conditions under which you would like images and videos of your child to be used, the school will abide by the conditions you outline in this form.

Why will we be using personal data on social media?

The school wants to use certain types of data on social media to promote the positive and inclusive ethos of the school – we aim to celebrate our students' and school's achievements, and social media allows us to do this.

Where the school uses images of individual students, the name of the student **will not** be disclosed. Where an individual student is named in a written publication, a photograph of the student **will not** be used to accompany the text.

If, for example, a student has won an award and their parent would like their name to be published alongside their image, **separate consent** will be obtained prior to this.

With your consent, the school may use personal data on social media, the school website, in school prospectuses and other printed publications, such as a newsletter.

Who will be able to see the data once it's on social media?

The school's privacy settings only allow people who have been accepted to view the content on our social media platforms; additionally, where it is possible, the school's settings do not allow for further sharing. Please note, this sharing restriction may not be possible on all social media platforms, meaning that, if the content has been posted and is subsequently shared, more people will be able to view that piece of content.

What are the conditions of use?

- This consent form is valid for the current academic year.
- It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school, in writing, if consent needs to be withdrawn or amended.
- The school will not use the personal details or full names of any student in an image or video on social media.
- The school will not include personal emails, postal addresses, or telephone or fax numbers on images or videos on social media.
- The school may use pictures of students and teachers that have been drawn by students.
- The school may post pictures of work created by students on social media.
- The school may use group or class images or videos with general labels, e.g. 'sports day'.
- The school will only use images and videos of students who are suitably dressed, i.e. it would not be suitable to display an image of a student in swimwear.
- The school will not post any sensitive data, such as details of SEND, without express and additional consent, and will then still anonymise the posts.

Providing your consent

Please read the following conditions thoroughly and provide your consent as appropriate by ticking either 'Yes' or 'No' for each criteria.

The school will **only** post personal data on social media for the conditions that you provide consent for.

I provide consent to	Yes	No
Using images of my child on the school's social media accounts.		
Using videos of my child on the school's social media accounts.		
Using images of my child on social media, including the following: [Delete and/or add as appropriate] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X • Facebook • Instagram 		
Using videos of my child on social media, including the following: [Delete and/or add as appropriate] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X • Facebook • Instagram 		
Using my child's first name on social media.		
Using my child's age on social media.		

Refreshing your consent

This form is valid for [the entire academic year](#), it will be updated on an [annual](#) basis. Parents are required to fill in a new form for their child [every academic year](#).

Consent will also be refreshed where any changes to circumstances occur – this can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- New requirements for consent, e.g. an additional social media account will be used to share student images and videos
- Changes to a student's circumstances, e.g. safeguarding requirements mean a student's image cannot be used
- Changes to parental consent, e.g. amending the provisions for which consent has been provided for

Where you would like to amend the provisions for which consent has been provided, you must submit your request in writing to the data protection officer (DPO). A new form will be supplied to you to amend your consent accordingly and provide a signature.

Withdrawing your consent

Parents have the right to withdraw their consent at any time. Withdrawing your consent will not affect the legality of processing personal data that was shared prior to withdrawal; however, the school will make every effort to remove posts about the student where possible, e.g. images of the student on social media will be removed.

If you would like to withdraw your consent, you must submit your request in writing to the DPO.

Declaration

I, _____ (name of parent), understand:

- Why my consent is required.
- The reasons why Pathway Schools Ltd uses my child my child's personal data on social media.
- Who will be able to view my child's personal data once posted.
- The conditions under which the school uses personal data of my child on social media.

- I have provided my consent above as appropriate, and the school will act in accordance with my requirements.
- Consent is refreshed on an annual basis and I must re-provide consent in subsequent academic years.
- I will be required to re-provide consent where any circumstances change.
- I can amend or withdraw my consent at any time and must do so in writing to the DPO.

Name of parent: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have any questions regarding this form, please do not hesitate to contact the DPO at [email address](#) or [phone number](#).