

# **ST BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**Reviewed by the Governors' Education Committee Summer 2023**

**Approved by the Full Governing Body Summer 2023**

**To be reviewed Summer 2024**

### **Purpose**

The widespread use of social media applications brings opportunities to engage and communicate in new ways. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that the use of social media by St Bartholomew's School Community (staff, students and parents) is undertaken responsibly, and that the confidentiality of students and staff, and the reputation of the school, are safeguarded.

### **Statement of intent**

This policy applies to all St Bartholomew's students, staff, parents and the wider school community. It covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

This policy applies to any electronic communication software. It is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media hence the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

### **Principles**

- Members of the School Community should be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate. They should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their school and personal interests.
- Members of the School Community should not engage in activities which could bring St Bart's into disrepute.
- Members of the School Community should not present their own views as those of the School on any public platform.
- Members of the School Community must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame any person or organisation.

### **Related policies, guidance and expectations**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and related documents:

- Staff Code of Conduct (covered in the Disciplinary Policy and Teachers' Standards)
- ICT policies for staff and students
- Safeguarding & Child Protection (Promoting the Welfare of Children) Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Equality Policy

### **Training**

The safe and responsible use of social media will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff

induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities.

### **Sanctioned use of school social media platforms by Staff**

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. The school currently has an official website, as well as social media accounts including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The school holds a list of staff with administrator rights. Staff who have any concerns about content viewed on school social media sites, they should contact the Headteacher.

When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff may 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 must be linked to an official school email account.
- The web address and identity of the site should be notified to the appropriate Head of Faculty or member of the Leadership Team before access is permitted for students.
- The content of any school-sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the school.
- Staff should not use school platforms to promote personal or political campaigns.
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of students through social media where the message is not public.
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link in the page to this policy on the school website.

Whilst students and the wider school community are encouraged to interact with these social media sites for educational purposes they should do so with responsibility and respect.

### **Staff use of social media – general guidance**

All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they believe them to be private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation.

### **Staff and Governors – guidelines for professional use**

- All email communication between staff and Governors and with the wider community should be made from and to official school email accounts.
- Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact students or parents, nor should any contact be accepted.
- Staff should not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff should maintain proper professional boundaries with students, parents and carers when communicating electronically.
- Staff should retain login information safely; work stations/portable devices should be locked when left unattended.
- Staff should confirm whether the school holds the permission from the parent/ carer / individual to

use a photograph and /or name on any media which could lead to the image being shared more widely. Assuming that permission has been gained, a photo may be posted on social media using a student's first name only.

- Staff should check that the content of any hyperlinks used in social media are appropriate.
- Staff should not tag photographs of staff or students.
- Staff should not engage in posts or activities which may be detrimental to working relationships between staff.
- Staff should, in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy report any inappropriate communications via social media involving any staff or students to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Staff should not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St Bartholomew's School into disrepute.

#### **Staff – guidelines for private use**

- Staff should always decline 'friend' requests and/or block *follows* from students received through personal social media accounts.
- Staff should set privacy settings on Facebook and other sites as strictly as possible, but should be aware that unless friends' settings are the same, posts may be seen more widely.
- Staff should not be commenting on or engaging with student profiles they may come across while using their personal social media, either those that are private or those that community based.
- Staff should not accept any contact from a former student of the school if under the age of 18. Social media contact with ex-students may leave staff's posts visible to current students. To guard against this, staff should set privacy setting so that posts can be seen by 'friends' but not 'friends of friends'.
- Staff should not have contact with a student's family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest.
- Staff should not discuss personal information about other students, St Bartholomew's School and the wider community they interact with on any social media site. Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about students and their family members or colleagues must not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- Staff are advised not to identify themselves as employees of St Bartholomew's School on their personal social media accounts; this is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the setting, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance with our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.
- Staff must not use personal social media accounts to contact students or parents, nor should any contact be accepted.
- Staff are advised to log out of accounts after use and keep passwords safe and confidential.

#### **Guidelines for students on general safe use of Social Media**

- Your online behaviour should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect and consideration

that you use face-to-face.

- Your use of social media should be age appropriate e.g. only over 13's should be using Facebook
- When posting comments or photos on social media channels, ask yourself whether you would be happy for your parents or your future employer to read your posts.
- Provide as little information about yourself as possible; not providing your date of birth, mobile phone number, location or email address publicly will improve your online security.
- You should set your privacy settings as strictly as possible, but be aware that unless your friends' settings are the same as yours, your posts may be seen more widely.
- Think carefully before engaging with strangers in 'open' environments, especially Twitter; be aware that 'protecting' your tweets will improve your online security.
- Do not send or request any inappropriate or offensive images, including those of a personal nature.
- Do not engage in any abusive, threatening, unkind or bullying behaviour.
- Use of profanity or threatening language is not acceptable.

#### **Guidelines for students on school-related Social Media use**

- Do not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on any social media sites.
- Do not tag or identify yourself (or other students) on St Bartholomew's School social media sites, even when using your own accounts, you should ask permission before tagging someone in a photo.
- Do not engage in any activities involving social media which might bring St Bartholomew's School into disrepute.
- Under no circumstances should negative comments be made about staff, parents or other students on social media sites.
- St Bartholomew's School reserves the right to monitor social media activity and if students are found contravening the guidelines then sanctions will be imposed, which may involve referral to other agencies, including the Police, where a crime may have been committed, to the Police.

#### **Guidelines for Parents**

- The school will monitor, and where appropriate, moderate content and activity on St Bartholomew's School social media platforms.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to monitor their child's activity on social media. The school cannot be held responsible for improper use of social media by students.
- If you do not wish your child's name or photograph to be used in connection with the School's official social media platforms, website or PR, you must advise the school via the Data Collection Sheet at the beginning of each school year or to the relevant House Office at other times.

#### **Monitoring**

The school deploys sophisticated software to monitor devices using the school internet/wi-fi. This is carried out without prior notification or authorisation from users. Highlighted concerns are followed up by senior members of staff and contact is made home with parents where appropriate.

There should be no expectation of privacy in anything students create, store, send or receive using the School's ICT systems.

#### **Breaches of this policy**

Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of St Bartholomew's School community should be reported to the DSL or one of the Deputy DSLs.

Any breach of this policy that leads to a risk to student welfare, breach of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of St Bartholomew's School or any illegal acts or acts that render St Bartholomew's School liable to third parties may result in legal action, disciplinary action or sanctions in line with the School's policies.

#### **Evaluation**

Breaches of this policy will be reported as necessary to the Governors' Education Committee. The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account the latest advice, good practice and technology available.

***This policy was agreed by Governors at a meeting of the Full Governing Body on  
10<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.***