



Rossmore School

Social Media Policy

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Statement of intent

Rossmore School understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our pupils against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our pupils 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 pupils in support of the school's mission, values and objectives.
- Protecting our pupils 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.

1. Legal framework

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

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

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy for Staff
- Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils
- E-Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Behaviour Principles Written Statements
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Managed Contact Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The overall implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff, parents and pupils 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.
- 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.
- 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 online safety officer and data protection officer (DPO) to ensure appropriate security measures are implemented and compliance with UK GDPR.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring the DSL's remit covers online safety.
- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring their own knowledge of online safety issues is up-to-date.
- Ensuring all staff undergo safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, at induction.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Staff.
- Ensuring pupils 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, pupils or parents to the headteacher immediately.
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents.
- 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 online safety meetings held by the school wherever possible.
- Not engaging in activities involving social media which might bring the school into disrepute.
- Not representing their personal views as those of the school on any social medium.
- Acting in the best interests of pupils when creating, participating in or contributing to social media sites.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy and the Pupil 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 online.
- Reporting online safety incidents and concerns in line with the procedures within this policy.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.

The communications officer is 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.
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up-to-date and relevant.

ICT technicians are 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. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines “**social media**” as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums, such as NetMums
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, such as Twitter

For the purpose of this policy, “**cyberbullying**” is defined as any social media or communication technology intentionally used to bully an individual or group, including the posting or sharing of messages, images or videos.

For the purpose of this policy, “**members of the school community**” are defined as any teacher, member of support staff, pupil, parent of a pupil, governor or ex-pupil.

4. Data protection principles

The school will not post any images or videos of pupils where their face is in the picture or in any way where they can be identified. If a picture does not meet this criteria, blockers will be used across children's face to remove any identifiable features or the photograph will be cropped/edited.

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 pupils will be posted in which they are suitably dressed, i.e. it would not be suitable to display an image of a pupil in swimwear.

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

The school will not post pupils' personal details on social media platforms and pupils' names will never be used alongside any videos or images in which they are present.

Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.
- Check photographs to ensure that no child is recognisable.

Any breaches of the data protection principles will be reported and handled by the school's Data Protection Officer.

5. Staff social media use

School accounts

The school's social media sites will only be created and monitored by the communications officer and other designated staff members. There will be a strong pedagogical or business reason for the creation of social media accounts on behalf of the school; official school profiles and accounts will not be created for trivial reasons.

A school 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.

The purpose of using social media at Rossmore School (in particular the site of X -formerly known as Twitter- and FaceBook) is to share with other stakeholders and the community the events and work that happens and to celebrate this with our community. The communications officer will endeavour to use the site to promote activities that happening in school e.g. Summer fayres and share pupils' work on a weekly basis.

Staff will be advised not to follow the school account with their personal account. Parents will be allowed to follow the school account and will be asked to follow the schools' policy on use of social media (outlined below). Pupils will not be permitted to follow the school site due to age restrictions of the site in use. The communications officer will monitor the requests to follow the school account and will remove followers if necessary.

The communications officer will check the content of the site daily to check that there is no damaging content being posted to the school. Any comments made in affiliation with the account deemed to be unacceptable will be removed in a timely manner and reported to the head teacher. Commenting will be a disabled feature on Facebook (it is not a feature that you can disable on Twitter so this will be monitored).

School social media passwords are kept by the Communications Officer– these are not shared with any unauthorised persons, including pupils, unless otherwise permitted by the headteacher. Staff will adhere to the data protection principles outlined in [section 4](#) of this policy at all times.

If staff want to post anything on social media then they will ask the communications officer for permission who will then review the content to ensure any posts are positive in nature and relevant to pupils, the work of staff, the school or any achievements. Content which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils will not be posted.

All content expressed on school social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.

If inappropriate content is accessed online, this information will be passed onto the relevant people e.g. the IT technician, DSL and/or Communications Officer.

The school's social media accounts will comply with site rules at all times, particularly with regards to the minimum age limit for use of the site. It will be noted that each networking site has their own rules which must be followed – the communications officer will induct staff to each new social media platform, providing them with the relevant training and information.

Personal accounts

Staff members will not access social media platforms during lesson times, but they are permitted to use social media during break times. Staff will not be permitted to use social media in front of pupils.

Staff members will not use any school-owned mobile devices to access personal accounts, unless it is beneficial to the material being taught – prior permission will be sought from the headteacher. Staff are not permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access personal accounts, unless otherwise permitted by the headteacher, and once the online safety officer has ensured the necessary network security controls are applied.

Staff will not 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact pupils or parents through their personal social media accounts. If pupils or parents attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' a staff member, they will report this to the headteacher.

Staff members will not provide their home address, phone number, mobile number, social networking details or email addresses to pupils or parents – any contact with pupils or parents will be done through authorised school contact channels. Staff members will use their school email address for school business and personal email address for their private correspondence; the two should not be mixed.

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. Where staff members use social media in a personal capacity, they will ensure it is clear that views are personal and are not those of the school.

No staff member will post any content online that is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils. Staff members will not post any information which could identify a pupil, class or the school – this includes any images, videos and personal information. Staff will not take any posts, images or videos from social media that belong to the school for their own personal use. Staff members will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

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.

Social media will not be used as a platform to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues or other professionals.

Staff members' personal information will not be discussed on social media.

6. Parent social media use

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 pupils when commenting on school social media sites, nor post comments concerning other pupils or staff members, in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Parents.

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.

7. Pupil social media use

Pupils will not access social media during lesson time. Pupils are not permitted to use the school's WiFi network to access any social media platforms and the online safety officer has ensured appropriate network security measures are applied.

Pupils will not attempt to 'friend', 'follow' or otherwise contact members of staff through their personal social media accounts. Pupils are only permitted to be affiliates of school social media accounts. Where a pupil or parent attempts to "friend" or 'follow' a staff member on their personal account, it will be reported to the headteacher.

Pupils will not post any content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or pupils. Pupils will not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

Pupils are instructed not to sign up to any social media sites that have an age restriction above the pupil's age.

If inappropriate content is accessed online on school premises, it will be reported to a teacher.

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

8. Online safety

Any disclosures made by pupils 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 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 Handbook, Allegations of Abuse Against Staff 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 pupil'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 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 pupils, 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 pupil 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 Safeguarding Policy.

As part of the usual communication with parents, the school will reinforce the importance of pupils 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 sites 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 Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan, 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:

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Snapchat

The online safety officer retains the right to monitor staff and pupil 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 the online safety officer so that the site can be blocked. Requests may be made to access erroneously blocked content by submitting a blocked content access form to the online safety officer, which will be approved by the headteacher.

10. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying incidents are taken seriously at Rossmore School. Any reports of cyberbullying on social media platforms by pupils will be handled in accordance with the Anti-bullying Policy.

Cyberbullying against pupils 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 pupils who may be at risk of cyberbullying or negative social media behaviour. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils. Teachers and support staff will receive training on social media as part of their new starter induction. Teachers and support staff will receive annual and ongoing training as part of their development.

Pupils will be educated about online safety and appropriate social media use on a termly basis through a variety of mediums, including assemblies, PSHE lessons and cross-curricular links. Pupils 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, such as our Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents.

Training for all pupils, 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 communications officer, in conjunction with the head teacher and DPO.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2025.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all staff, pupils 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?	✓ / X
Reasons:	
Staff name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Social media consent form – Whilst Rossmore School are not posting images of pupils that are identifiable, this consent form will not be used.

This consent form provides information pertaining to how Rossmore School 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 pupil:	
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 pupils' and school's achievements and social media allows us to do this.

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

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 pupil 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 pupils and teachers that have been drawn by pupils.
- The school may post pictures of work created by pupils 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 pupils who are suitably dressed, i.e. it would not be suitable to display an image of a pupil 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, including the School Twitter account.		
Using videos of my child on the school's social media accounts, including the School Twitter account.		

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 pupil images and videos
- Changes to a pupil's circumstances, e.g. safeguarding requirements mean a pupil'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 head teacher who will ensure that the relevant bodies know the change to consent. 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 pupil where possible, e.g. images of the pupil 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 Rossmore School 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 school at admin@rossmore.cheshire.sch.uk or 01513293688.