



# **Use of Social Media Policy**

**(including mobile phone protocol)**

**Agreed by Governors: Autumn 2024**

**To be reviewed: Autumn 2025**

# Social Media - Protecting Professional Identity

## Introduction

Social Networking Sites are now widely used for keeping in touch with each other. As a school we ask that the following points are adhered to protect staff and pupils. With an increase in use of all types of social media for professional and personal purposes, this policy sets out clear guidance for staff to manage risk and behaviour online to provide essential protection for individuals and groups.

## Aims of the policy

- To protect pupils, staff, the school and all individuals when any material is published online.
- To protect staff from allegations of abuse and from other comments that are damaging to their reputations.
- To ensure that all teachers and members of the support teams adhere to the expectations for professional conduct as set out in 'Teachers Standards 2012'.
- In line with the school's duty of care, to provide a safe learning and working environment for pupils and staff. Staff members who harass, cyberbully, discriminate on the grounds of sex, race or disability or who defame a third party may render the school liable to criticism or further action taken by the injured party.

The school provides the following measures to ensure reasonable steps are in place to minimise risk of harm to pupils, staff and the school through limiting access to personal information:

- Training to include the following: acceptable use; social media risks; checking of settings; data protection; reporting issues
- Clear reporting guidance, including responsibilities, procedures and sanctions
- Risk assessment, including legal risk

School staff should ensure that:

- They make no reference in social media to students / pupils, parents / carers or school staff
- They do not engage in online discussion on personal matters relating to members of the school community
- Their personal opinions are not attributed to the school
- Privacy settings are used to control who can see their profile and personal information.
- They use the 'Block' feature to stop specific people viewing their profile.
- They avoid adding pupils or parents as friends and keep any contact to a strictly professional context. The only exception should be if a parent is a relative.
- They consider carefully the subjects that they discuss. If there is an issue with a child, colleague or parent, this should be discussed in a professional manner with the appropriate member of staff and never on social media.
- They always avoid the passing on of personal or other confidential information or engaging in online conversations that could lead to complaints from parents or other member of staff or compromise their professional integrity.
- They think very carefully before they post any images that could lead to complaints from parents or other member of staff or compromise their professional integrity.

- They exercise caution regarding the use of You Tube and avoid posting embarrassing or compromising photos or videos.

This policy is explained to all new members of the staff team and to students who carry out placements at the school as a part of the induction procedure.

### **Curriculum organisation**

As part of our commitment to child safety, the safe use of the Internet forms a critical part of our ICT curriculum where pupils are reminded of how to use sites safely. This is further supported by our PSHE curriculum.

Please use the websites below for further information:

#### **Facebook privacy settings:**

<http://www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php>

**DFE Guidance: Cyberbullying Supporting School Staff:** [Cyber bullying: advice for headteachers and school staff \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Reporting inappropriate use of social media**

If a member of staff is aware of another member of staff or a child misusing social media, it should be reported immediately to a senior member of staff. If the allegation is against the Headteacher, this should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Once all the information has been gathered, regarding the misuse, parents will be contacted in the event of a child misusing social media. In the event of a member of staff being reported, HR will be contacted to seek advice regarding the next steps. If the allegation involves a child protection issue, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted, and the usual procedures will be followed for when an allegation is made against a member of staff.

Any reporting should be carried out according to school policy, signed and dated.

### **Mobile Phone Policy (including acceptable use protocol)**

At Dothill Primary School our responsibility to safeguard the welfare and well-being of our pupils is paramount. The aim of this Mobile Phone Protocol is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However, as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to ALL mobile communication devices.

This protocol applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes employees, governors and others associated with the school (referred to in this document as school representatives) children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

## **Code of conduct**

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus, creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity. Please remember, you are always ambassadors for the school and unacceptable use of mobile technology WILL reflect upon the school. Keep your personal and professional lives separate. School representatives must always act professionally and must not, through their actions or inactions, bring the school into disrepute.

At Dothill Primary School it is our aim that all school representatives understand the following:

- have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse
- understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use and the requirements of confidentiality to safeguard children
- know how to minimise risk
- avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations
- are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours
- are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly

Employees should be aware that the use of mobile phones and devices in a manner contrary to this policy may result in disciplinary action.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust (Acceptable Use) is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

### **Personal Mobiles - Staff**

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight in the classroom stock cupboard or in the staffroom during class time.
- Mobile phones must not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, corridors or playground).
- Use of phones (inc. receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff security-protect access to the functions of their phone.
- Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Headteacher aware of this and can have their phone available on silent in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- The school office should be the first point of contact for staff relatives to reach staff members in an emergency.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images. Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and ipads.
- Support staff, e.g. caretaker, who operate across the whole site may use their mobile phone as a direct contact with offsite contractors but should endeavour to use the phone away from where children are present in line with other staff protocols.

Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Headteacher.

## **Mobile Phones for work related purposes**

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication on offsite activities. However, staff should ensure the following:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional
- Mobile phones should not be used as an alternative to a school camera or iPad and never used for taking photographs of children.
- Staff may not use their mobile phones to contact parents except in the interest of a child's safety when off site and out of office hours according to agreed protocol.

Where parents are accompanying school trips they are acting as a school representative therefore they should make no contact with parents/carers of children other than their own (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip. They must not use their phone to take photographs. Private and personal use of their phone and should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present.

## **Personal Mobile Phones / Devices – Pupils**

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However, we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. To be able to safeguard our pupils effectively children are not permitted to have a mobile phone in school. If it is deemed necessary for a child to have a phone for a particular reason, they must hand it into the class teacher at the beginning of the school day and collect it before leaving school premises. School will not accept any responsibility for the loss or damage to any mobile phone.

## **Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors**

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our Mobile Phones and Devices Policy as it relates to school representatives whilst on the premises. On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations on the use of mobile phones and devices in an educational setting and will be asked not to use their mobile phones in a place where children are present.

## **Parents**

We would ask parents not to use their mobile phones whilst in the school building but to make any urgent calls outside.

We recognise that parents and carers will wish to take photos and videos of their children at school events such as concerts, shows and sports events for personal use, such as to add to their family photo albums. Mindful to ensure that Data Protection legislation is not contravened and to safeguard the welfare of young people within school, we insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own without their consent.

Visitors can expect that the school may provide written guidance beforehand and/or may make an announcement before events as a reminder of this guidance.