

	Name of School	Corbets Tey School
	Policy Review Date	Spring Term 2022
	Next Review Date	Spring Term 2023
	Reviewed by	Governor Name: Jeff Stafford Governor Signature: 

Social Media Policy

Equality Impact Assessment

The school aims to design and implement services, policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our provision, population and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at an unreasonable or unfair disadvantage over others. We are confident that this policy does not place anyone at an unreasonable or unfair disadvantage, and is compliant with relevant equalities legislation.

Where the school is referred to in this policy, the policy and the following procedures apply to all staff working for Corbets Tey School on all sites.

1.0 Aims & Purpose

1.1 While acknowledging the benefits of social media and the internet it is also important to recognise that risk to the safety and well-being of users is ever-changing and that the misuse/abuse of these facilities can range from inappropriate to criminal; and the school has this policy in place to deal with any misuse of social media.

1.2 To assist those who work with students to work safely and responsibly, to monitor their own standards of behaviour and to prevent the abuse of their position of trust with students, we:

- Offer guidance on utilising social media for educational, personal and recreational use.
- Advise that, in the event of unsafe and/or unacceptable behaviour arising from the inappropriate use of social media, disciplinary or legal action (including gross misconduct leading to dismissal) will be taken if necessary, in order to support safer working practices and minimise the risk of malicious allegations against staff colleagues and others who have contact with students at the school.

2.0 Scope and Definitions

2.1 This policy applies to teachers, support staff, governors, volunteers and all who work on the school sites.

2.2 For the purposes of this policy, social media refers to web based social networks, internet forums and blogs (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, TicTok, etc.). Given the rapid expansion of social media, it is impossible to list all possible types of media as they are constantly evolving and multiplying.

2.3 School staff should assume that all online activity is covered by this policy and should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use, both at work and to an extent in their personal situation.

3.0 Use of Social Media within the School

3.1 School staff are not permitted to access social media websites from the school's computers or other school devices at any time, unless authorised to do so by a member of the school leadership team.

3.2 However, staff may use their own devices to access social media websites while they are on official breaks in school, outside of session times. Excessive use of social media, which could be considered to interfere with school productivity and providing an education service, is considered a misconduct matter and subject to the school's disciplinary policy and procedure.

3.3 Staff should assume that any content they write/photograph/film (regardless of their privacy settings), could become public. Therefore, they should ensure that any content they produce is professional, maintaining a clear distinction between their personal and professional school lives.

3.4 Any use of social media made in a professional capacity must not

- Bring the school into disrepute;
- Breach confidentiality;
- Breach copyrights of any kind;
- Bully, harass or be discriminatory in any way;
- Be defamatory or derogatory.

4.0 Use of Social Media Outside of School

4.1 The school appreciates that staff may make use of social media in a personal capacity. However, staff must be aware that if they are recognised from their user profile as being associated with the school, opinions they express could be considered to reflect the school's opinions and so could damage the reputation of the school.

4.2 For this reason, they should avoid mentioning the school by name, or any member of staff by name or position or any details relating to a student of the school. Opinions offered should not bring the school into disrepute, breach confidentiality or copyright, bully, harass or discriminate in any way.

5.0 General Considerations

5.1 When using social media whether at work or outside of work, staff and others within school should:

- Never share work log-in details or passwords.
- Keep personal phone numbers private.
- Never give personal email addresses or other personal data to students, parents, carers or any other party.
- Never disclose any information confidential to the school, to third parties
- Never publish material that is illegal
- Restrict access to inappropriate groups of people on their social media sites and pages.

- Not link their own blog or other personal web pages to the school website

5.2 Those working with children and young people have a legal duty of care and are therefore expected to adopt the highest standards of behaviour to retain the confidence and respect of governors, colleagues and students both within and outside of school. They should maintain appropriate boundaries and manage personal information effectively so that it cannot be misused by third parties e.g. for 'cyber-bullying' or identity theft. School staff should refer to the school's Whistle Blowing Policy if they have any safeguarding concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff involving the inappropriate use of social media.

5.3 Staff are prohibited from and should not make 'friends' with students at the school because this could potentially be construed as 'grooming', nor should they accept invitations to become a 'friend' of any students.

5.4 Staff should also carefully consider contact with a student's family members because this may give rise to concerns over objectivity and/or impartiality.

5.5 Staff should keep any communications with students transparent and professional and should only use the school's systems for communications. Governors should be mindful of this as well and act similarly in the course of their duties

5.6 If there is any doubt or uncertainty about whether communication between a member of staff and a student, parent or carer is acceptable and appropriate, a member of the school's leadership team should be informed; so that they can decide how to deal with the situation. All staff are personally responsible for what they communicate on social media.

5.7 Often materials published will be accessible by the public and will remain accessible for a long time. Before joining the school, new employees should check any information they have posted on social media sites and remove any post(s) that could cause embarrassment or offence

6.0 Misuse of Social Media

6.1 While acknowledging the undoubted benefits of social media and the internet; it is also important to recognise that there is a risk to the safety and well-being of users. This is ever-changing and evolving and the misuse/abuse of these facilities can range from inappropriate to criminal.

Misuse of social media can be summarised as follows:

6.2 Contact

- Commercial (tracking, harvesting personal information).
- Aggressive (being bullied, harassed or stalked).
- Sexual (meeting strangers, being groomed).
- Values (self-harm, unwelcome persuasions).

6.3 Conduct

- Commercial (illegal downloading, hacking, gambling, financial scams).
- Aggressive (bullying or harassing another).
- Sexual (creating and uploading inappropriate material).
- Values (providing misleading information or advice).

6.4 Content

- Commercial (advert, spam, sponsorship, personal information).
- Aggressive (violent/hateful content).
- Sexual (pornographic or unwelcome sexual content).
- Values (bias, any protected characteristic defined under the Equality Act 2010, misleading info or advice).

7.0 Misconduct and Disciplinary Action

7.1 Any alleged breach of conduct under this policy may lead to disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary policy and procedure. Any serious breaches of this policy which are proven, such as incidents of bullying or of social media activity causing reputational or material damage to the school, may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to the staff member's dismissal.

7.2 In addition, all school staff, governors and volunteers must be aware of what is considered to be 'criminal' and constituting an illegal act, when using social media or the internet and electronic communication in general. For example, buying or selling stolen goods, cyber bullying, inciting of religious hatred and acts of terrorism, the grooming and harassment of a child or young person. These examples are not exhaustive and you should seek advice if you are unsure.

7.3 Teachers should be mindful that their standards of conduct have to meet the requirements imposed on them by Part Two of the Teachers Standards

8.0 Monitoring & Review

8.1 The school will monitor the impact of this policy using logs of reported incidents. The policy and school practices will be reviewed by the governors annually or more regularly if required, in the light of any incidents that have taken place. The school is also mindful of significant new developments in the use of the technologies, or perceived new threats. In response, we will periodically seek professional advice to ensure we are responding appropriately.

Links to other Documents and Policies:

- Staff AUP
- Governors AUP and Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- What We Do If Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Single Equality Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy