

# Social Media Policy

St Margaret's CEVA Primary School



**Approved by:** Full Governing Body

**Date:** September 30th 2025

**Last reviewed on:** Autumn 2025

**Next review due by:** Autumn 2026

## **Social Media Policy – Staff**

\*In the context of this policy “everyone” refers to members of staff, governors and anyone working in a voluntary capacity at St. Margaret’s CEVA Primary School.

### **Introduction**

Social networking activities conducted online outside work, such as blogging (writing personal journals to publicly accessible internet pages), involvement in social networking sites such as Facebook and posting material, images or comments on sites such as You Tube can have a negative effect on an organisation’s reputation or image. In addition, St Margaret’s CEVA Primary has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work.

This policy has been written to set out the key principles and code of conduct that we expect of all members of staff with respect to their responsibilities in connection with the use of social networking sites.

### **Key Principles**

- Everyone at St Margaret’s CEVA Primary has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of school and to treat all colleagues with professionalism and respect
- It is important to protect everyone at St Margaret’s from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites.
- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members of staff and it is essential that everyone at St Margaret’s CEVA Primary considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites outside of school. Anyone working in the school either as a paid employee or volunteer must not communicate with pupils and ex-pupils via social networking and must not accept or initiate Facebook or any other social networking friend requests from pupils and ex-pupils enrolled at St Margaret’s
- This policy relates to social networking outside work. Accessing social networking sites at work using school equipment is not permitted unless it is being used by designated staff school publicity or promotion.

### **Aims**

- To set out the key principles and code of conduct expected of all members of staff, governors and volunteers at St Margaret’s in respect to social networking.
- To further safeguard and protect children and staff.

### **Code of Conduct for Social Networking**

The following are not considered acceptable at St Margaret’s CEVA Primary:

- The use of the school’s name, logo, or any other published material without written prior permission from the Head teacher. This applies to any published material including the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the school to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage its reputation. This includes defamatory comments.

- The disclosure of confidential or business-sensitive information; or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the school.
- The posting of any images of employees, children or anyone directly connected with the school whilst engaged in school activities except by a designated person for agreed publicity use.

**In addition to the above everyone at St Margaret's must:**

- Not make any derogatory, defamatory, rude, threatening or inappropriate comments about the school, or anyone at or connected with the school
- Use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal/ professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings
- Be aware of the potential of on-line identity fraud and to be cautious when giving out personal information about themselves which may compromise their personal safety and security
- Not share any personal information with a child or young person
- Not give out personal contact details including email, home or mobile numbers to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed by the Head teacher
- Not use internal or web based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person
- Never use or access social networking sites of pupils
- Ensure all communications are transparent and be aware they are open to scrutiny
- Ensure that pupils are never listed as approved contacts on social networking sites and if a member of staff make sure that all social networking sites are set to 'private'
- If a member of staff not initiate or accept social networking site 'friend' or similar requests from parents of pupils without the permission of the Head teacher

**Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct**

In instances where there has been a breach of the above Code of Conduct, the following will apply:

Any breaches of this policy will be fully investigated. Where it is found that there has been a breach of the policy this may result in action being taken under the Disciplinary Procedure. A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence which is also contrary to the school's ethos and principles.

## **Social Networking Policy - Parents**

### **Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents**

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about school and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, the school recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about school, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with it:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would private and confidential discussions with school be more appropriate? E.g. if there are serious allegations being made/concerns being raised. Social media/internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people. Please contact school to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified, particularly if school has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to school; any detrimental harm that the school may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

### **Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents**

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about school (and those associated with it), it is never appropriate to do so.

Where a parent has a concern, this must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the class teacher, Phase Leaders, senior leader and then the Head teacher so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned. (See Complaints Policy).

The school considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at school or cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the school or staff at St. Margaret's;
- Making defamatory statements about school or staff at St. Margaret's;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at St. Margaret's;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

**Procedure the school will follow if inappropriate use continues:**

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/ren at St Margaret's is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report content or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer removes such comments immediately and will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head teacher to discuss the breaking of the Home-School Agreement and the possible repercussions of such action.

If the parent refuses to comply with these procedures and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the school considers inappropriate, the school will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the school's concerns to the individual in writing, giving them a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the Police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.