



Rothbury First School

Social Media Policy

June 2025

Review Date June 2026

Rothbury First School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

1. Introduction

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.

While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Rothbury First School staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded.

Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Rothbury First School's governing body, all teaching and other staff whether or not employed directly by the school, external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, teacher trainees and other trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals are collectively referred to as 'staff members' in this policy.

This policy 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 personal web space such as social networking sites (for example *Facebook*, *Myspace*), blogs, microblogs such as *Twitter*, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*, social bookmarking sites such as *del.icio.us*, *Pinterest* and content sharing sites such as *Flickr* and *YouTube*. The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

3. Legal Framework

This policy will have due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990, amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006

This policy also has due regard to non-statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- HM Government (2015) 'Information sharing'

Staff members will also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Defamation Act 2013
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998

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

- Acceptable Use Policy
- E-safety Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Social Media Agreement
- Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

4. Roles and responsibilities

The headteachers will, with support from the E-safety Officer, be responsible for:

- Monitoring and reviewing all school-run social media accounts.
- Vetting and approving individuals who wish to be 'friends' 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.
- Creating a terms of use agreement, which all content published must be in accordance with.
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up-to-date and relevant.

The head teachers will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that social media is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Obtaining consent from individuals who the school wishes to post content about.

Members of staff are responsible for:

- 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.
- Demonstrating the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the school.
- Only using official school social media sites for communicating with pupils, parents, or to enable pupils or parents to communicate. Social media sites may be used in other ways, e.g. advertising a job vacancy; however, this will be approved by the headteachers.

5. Personal Use of Social Media

- Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of Rothbury First School or service providers for the school in their personal web space. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services.
- Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil, whether from Rothbury First School or any other school, unless the pupils are family members.
- Rothbury First School does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.
- Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.
- If staff members wish to communicate with pupils through social media sites or to enable pupils to keep in touch with one another, they can only do so with the approval of the school and through official school sites.
- Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils they receive in their personal social media accounts. Instead, if they receive such requests from pupils who are not family members, they must discuss these in general terms in class and signpost pupils to become 'friends' of the official school site.
- On leaving Rothbury First School's service, staff members must not contact Rothbury First School's pupils by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media.

- Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues and other parties and school corporate information must not be discussed on their personal web space.
- Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school uniforms or clothing with school logos or images identifying sensitive school premises must not be published on personal web space.
- School or County Council email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself.
- Rothbury First School corporate, service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal web space.
- Staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties and, in practice, personal use of the internet should not be on the school's time. Occasional use of ICT facilities for personal reasons during a designated break is acceptable - all such uses must be consistent with the school's Staff Code of Conduct, the Acceptable Use Policy (Information Technology) and the law.
- Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.
- Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

6. General social media rules

- Staff members' personal information, or pupils' personal information, will not be discussed on social media.
- Authors will be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information.
- Social media will not be used as a platform to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues or other professionals.
- All content expressed on school social media accounts will not breach copyright, data protection or freedom of information legislation.
- The school 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 headteachers will induct staff to each new social media platform, providing them with the relevant training and information.

7. Data protection

- The school will ensure that data that is to be used on social media, i.e. image, is obtained and processed in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy.
- Unless another lawful basis is being used, the school will not post content without the express consent of individuals.
- Pupils will be asked to provide their own consent, where appropriate.
- A record of consent is maintained throughout the academic year, which details the pupils for whom consent has been provided. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this consent record remains up-to-date.
- The headteachers and pupils' parents will assess whether a pupil is capable of providing their own consent for content to be published on social media, e.g. images.
- Parents and pupils are able to withdraw or amend their consent at any time. To do so, parents and pupils must inform the school in writing.
- Where parents or pupils withdraw or amend their consent, it will not affect the processing of any images or videos prior to when consent was withdrawn or amended. Processing will cease in line with parents' and pupils' requirements following this.

Before posting on social media, staff will:

- Refer to the consent record log to ensure consent has been received for that pupil and for the exact processing activities required.
- Ensure that there is no additional identifying information relating to a pupil.
- The school will only use first names when posting images, so that individuals are not easily identifiable.
- When posting images and videos of pupils, the school will apply data minimisation techniques, such as pseudonymisation (blurring a photograph), to reduce the risk of a pupil being identified.
- The school's social media privacy settings will be set so that only certain people can see the content.
- The school will ensure that all processing information in relation to social media is included on privacy notices.
- The school will ensure that any photographs that are to be published have been checked by the DSL/headteacher.
- If an individual wishes for the school to remove an image on social media in which they appear, the school will oblige.
- As well as seeking consent beforehand, the school will ensure the details of any personal data that is shared on social media will be outlined in a privacy notice.

8. Creating accounts on behalf of the school

- The school social media sites will only be created and monitored by the headteacher 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.
- If members of staff wish to create a new social media account, they will complete the Social media site creation approval form and return it to the E-safety officer, who will approve it with the headteacher and then create the account on the behalf of the requesting individuals.
- The headteacher will be consulted about the purpose of the proposed site and its content.
- 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.

Consideration will be given to the following aspects:

- The purpose for using social media
- Whether the overall investment will achieve the pedagogical aim
- The level of interactive engagement with the site
- Whether pupils, staff, parents or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the account
- How much time and effort are staff members willing to commit to the proposed site
- A clear plan which outlines aspects such as how long the site will last
- How the success of the site will be evaluated

Approval for participating, on behalf of the school, on sites created by third parties will be obtained from the headteacher via the headteachers.

9. Content published on behalf of the school

- All content and information provided on social media accounts will be worthwhile and accurate.
- Staff will only post information on school social media accounts where it is deemed beneficial and necessary.
- Staff members will not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school without authorisation from the headteacher.
- All staff will be made aware of the relevant child protection, privacy, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright law that may apply to the content.
- Staff members will respect their audience and be sensitive in the tone of language used when discussing topics that others may find controversial or objectionable.
- Consideration will be given to the type of language that is used in order to ensure it is appropriate for the audience, e.g. swearing and innuendos are highly inappropriate on school sites.
- Personal opinions will not be expressed on any school media accounts.
- School account profiles will always include the school logo or brand to ensure transparency and confidence in the site.
- The school logo will, where possible, link back to the relevant page on the school website.

- Any content that is contributed to staff members' own or third-party hosted sites will be discussed with, and approved by, the headteacher.
- The E-safety officer/headteacher will take responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the site up-to-date and relevant.
- Images and videos of pupils will not be published without written consent from a parent/guardian, or the pupil when appropriate.
- Content will not identify any pupil by their full name or allow any identifying information to be published without the written consent of a parent/guardian, or the pupil when appropriate.
- Where a pupil is assessed by the school to have the competence to understand what they are consenting to, the school will obtain consent directly from that pupil; otherwise, consent is obtained from whoever holds parental responsibility for the child.
- Consideration will be given to the level of engagement of contributors.
 - Measures will be in place to monitor content uploaded by users.
 - Permission will be sought from the relevant people before citing or referencing their work.

10. Parental interaction with school social media

- Parents are able to comment on or respond to information shared via social media sites; however, parents must do so in a way which does not damage the reputation of the school.
- Parents will not share any photos or personal details of pupils when commenting on the school social media sites.
- Parents will not post comments concerning other pupils or staff members on the school social media sites, in accordance with the Social Media 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.

11. Monitoring and moderation

- All content is moderated and reviewed, using the terms of use as guidance.
- Moderation of social media content is the responsibility of the individual or team that initiated the account.
- At least two members of staff will be appointed as administrators, whose role it is to review and moderate the content.
- In case of absence or turnover, other members of staff will be adequately trained and prepared to maintain and moderate the social media accounts.
- Sites created for, and contributed to, by pupils will have the strongest privacy settings to prevent breaches of confidentiality.
- Staff members contributing to school accounts will identify who they are.
- Members of staff will disclose their positions within the school on social media accounts and profiles. They will never give out their personal information, such as home contact details or email addresses, on these sites.

- Inappropriate comments or abuse about the school are to be immediately removed, and reported to the headteacher. Such comments will never be posted on behalf of the school.
- In the case of illegal content or behaviour, the headteacher will immediately inform the appropriate authorities, such as the police and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre.
- Any media enquiries will be forwarded to the E-safety officer/headteacher immediately.
- Staff members will not communicate with the media without the advice or approval of the headteacher.
- Care will be taken to ensure that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any proposal to use social media to advertise the school, or a third party, will be approved by the headteacher.
- Approval will be obtained from the school's E safety officer or headteacher to mention an external organisation in content or make them a 'friend' or 'follower'.
- Individuals wishing to be 'friends' on the school's social media platforms will be vetted and approved by the E safety officer or headteacher before being accepted. Their activity will be reviewed regularly and checked against the terms of use.

12. Breaches of the policy

- Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member(s) involved, in line with the school's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Breaches of confidentiality, defamation or damage to the reputation of the school may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- The school will inform the LA immediately of any breaches of the policy, so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Any action that is taken against breaches of this policy will be according to the relevant disciplinary procedures.
- Data breaches may be reported to the ICO, if there is a risk of the data adversely affecting individuals' rights and freedoms.
- The headteacher will be responsible for handling any breaches.

13. Monitoring and review

- This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the E safety officer in conjunction with the headteachers and governors; any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents, where necessary.
- All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programmes.

Rothbury First School Social Media Policy

Date reviewed by Governors: June 2024
Date for next review: June 2025

Appendix A

Social media site creation approval form

Use of social media on behalf of the school must be approved by the E safety officer and headteacher prior to setting up sites.

Please complete this form and return it to the headteacher.

Purpose of using social media		
Please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site		
What are your aims and what do you hope to achieve by setting up this site?		
What is the proposed content of the site?		
Proposed audience of the site		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of the school Ages: 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> School staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members
<input type="checkbox"/> External organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils from other schools Schools involved:	<input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)		
Proposed contributors to the site		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of the school Ages: 3-9	<input type="checkbox"/> School staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members
<input type="checkbox"/> External organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils from other schools Schools involved:	<input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please give details)		
Administration of the site		
Names of administrators: Cheryl Auld Helen Duffield		
Who will vet external contributors? (Please state name and job role)		
Who will host the site?		

Proposed date of going live:		
How do you propose to advertise for contributors?		
If contributors include pupils, how do you propose to inform and obtain the consent of parents or responsible adults?		
What security measures will you take to prevent unwanted or unsuitable individuals from contributing or becoming 'friends' etc. of the site?		
Approval		
Approval from relevant people must be obtained before the site can be created. The relevant managers must read this form and complete the information below before final approval can be given by the headteacher.		
E safety Officer I approve the aims and content of the proposed site and the use of the school brand and logo.	Name:	
	Signature:	
	Date:	
Headteacher I approve the aims and content of the proposed site and the use of the school brand and logo.	Name:	
	Signature:	
	Date:	

Appendix B Social Media Consent Forms

Tapestry Consent

In Early Years, we use the online learning journal programme, Tapestry. This is where we will collect all of the observations we do within the setting. These can be individual or group observations. You will be able to gain access to your Tapestry account to see the observations we have stored on your child and you will also be able to add your own observations of your child at home to the system via the App which will help staff in school when making assessments of their progress. Parents are only able to view their own child's journal, and all information is stored on a highly secure server which is monitored closely.

Tapestry will allow you to add observations and photographs of your own as well as sharing your comments with us. Please note that Tapestry is just one of the many forms of assessment we use, so whatever is on Tapestry will not be the only information that we use to assess your child's development.

We will use the email you have indicated as your preference for ParentMail to activate your account. You will be able to see all of the observations for your child. If you consent to your child being photographed as part of a group observation, these will be visible to the parents of the other children within the group who were observed. In order for us to use Tapestry for your child, we need the following consent to be completed and signed.

Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ I would like my child to be added to Tapestry.
- ☐ I will **not** publish any of my child's observations, photographs or videos from Tapestry on any social media site.
- ☐ I give consent that my child's photograph may appear on their friend's learning Journal account, and I may see pictures of my child's friends on my child's personal account.

Parental Permission 2020 – 2021

Please tick the appropriate box

	Yes I give permission.	No I do not give permission.
Do you give permission for your child to take part in local activities and visits within walking distance of the school? (for example, Cragside, Rothbury village, Golf Club, Middle School, etc)		
Do you give permission for your child's photograph/video to be taken by a member of the school staff and used for lessons and displays in school?		
Do you give your permission for your child's photograph/video to be used in media which may be accessed by the general public? (for example: school newsletters, school website, school social media feeds, local press, etc) Please note that school will only use first names in any accompanying text.		
Do you give your permission for your child to be photographed as part of their class by the School Photographer (currently Tempest)? The class photograph may be bought by other parents in school.		
If your child attends an after-school club, do you give permission for your child to be photographed by the After School Club provider for their own publicity purposes?		
Do you give permission for suncream to be applied to your child?		

