



# ST JAMES' C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Policy On Parental Use Of Social Networking And Internet Sites

*'With exploring minds, and faith; we grow and learn together'*  
*'Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path' ~ Psalm 119: v105*

*Our vision is to ensure children enjoy learning and, with exploring minds, are actively engaged in their studies. At St James' our curriculum will provide them with skills, knowledge and personal characteristics that enable them to make the most of their lives and take the opportunities they encounter. This approach is mirrored by the staff who reflect and adapt in order to develop their practice as the dedicated professionals that they are. In this way we grow and learn together as we follow the St James Way: Be Kind, Be Respectful and to always Give Your All.*

*From the foundation offered by our infant counterparts, where they: 'teach the children to choose the right path', Proverbs 22:6. Our vision is to follow on that journey. We teach that the Lord's word is a lamp to their feet, a light to such path.~ Psalm 119: v105. This Christian vision is underpinned by our teaching of the Christian faith and our school values of: Peace, Compassion, Friendship, Forgiveness, Thankfulness and Endurance.*

**Date: February 2025**

**Review: February 2026**

## **Overview**

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter) are now widely used and these types of media allow people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. Unfortunately, such sites can be used inappropriately by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about schools and their staff. This document sets out this school's approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures that will be followed and action that may be taken when it is considered that parents have used such facilities inappropriately. Where there is reference to "parent" in this document this also include carers, relatives or anyone associated with the school.

## **Objectives**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking site
- Safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites
- Clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents
- Set out the procedures the school will follow where it is considered that parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites to the detriment of the school, staff, pupils or anyone else associated with the school
- Set out the action the school will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites

## **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 the 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 the school, staff, pupils or anyone else associated with the school:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would a private and confidential discussion with someone in the school be more appropriate? If there are serious allegations being made/concerns being raised, social media or internet sites should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments. Please contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm which would not be justified, particularly if the school has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the 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 the school and those associated with it, it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels such as a private and confidential discussion with the Headteacher or member of the Governing Body, or using the school's formal complaints process are much better

suitable to this. 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):

- Naming children or posting any comments about children who attend St James C of E Infant School
- Uploading digital images of children without their parent's permission
- Making allegations about staff or anyone else connected with the school
- Making any posts that could be deemed to be cyber-bullying
- Making complaints about the school or staff at the school
- Making defamatory statements about the school or staff at the school
- Posting negative or offensive comments about staff or any other individual connected to the school
- Posting racist or prejudicial comments or messages supportive of extremism, terrorism, or which contradicts 'British values'
- Posting comments which threaten violence

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking and other 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. Please note that most social networking sites require the user to be at least 14 years old.

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

The School will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve it and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this 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 you in writing, giving you 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, grossly offensive or is threatening violence
- We will report concerns to our SPOC (Single Point of Contact for Prevent) for any views expressing radicalisation or extremism and this may then be reported to the appropriate body such as the police.
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the school may act 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

**If you have any concerns about the use of social media and/or the internet linked to St James' Juniors school, a staff member, and/or a child/pupil, then please do not hesitate to contact the school for advice and/or guidance. Thank you**