



LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0 At Long Close School we recognise the opportunities offered by social media and seek to promote the positive use of these online tools for the purposes of education and communication within the school community.
- 1.2. The School recognises that staff, parents, and pupils utilise social media within personal and professional contexts. This policy sets out guidelines staff must adhere to for both professional and personal use in order to maintain control and present an informed and professional approach to these online tools.

## 2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to personal use of social media and any professional school online presentations and accounts on all social media platforms.
- 2.2 The terms *Social media platforms, sites and accounts* referred to in this policy are any sites where content is posted directly by the users and shared with both public and private followers.
- 2.3 This includes (but not limited to):
  - Resource and Content sharing and collecting sites e.g. *YouTube, Glogster, Padlet, Pinterest, Tumblr*
  - Blogging and Mini-Blogging sites e.g. *Twitter, Wordpress, Kidblog*
  - Profile and Discussion sites e.g. *Edmodo, Facebook, Schoolrack*
  - Wikis e.g. *Wikipedia, PBWorks*
  - Curriculum / Class Websites created by teachers
- 2.4 This policy makes the distinction between:
  - **Professional posts and accounts** being those relating to school events, curriculum resources and guidance and matters of interest to the school community and commissioned directly by the school.
  - **Personal posts and accounts** being those related to staff members endeavours and opinions not connected to their professional lives or school activities and interests.
- 2.5 **For professional accounts** this policy sets out
  - Action to take before setting up an account
  - Expectations for conduct and maintenance on professional accounts
- 2.6 **For personal accounts** this policy sets out

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- Expectations for conduct on personal accounts

### 3.0 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Long Close School is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work.

3.2 Disclosure of confidential information on social media is unacceptable and in contravention of statutory obligations including:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality
- The Data Protection Act 1998

3.3 Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Personal-identifiable information (e.g. pupil or employee records which are protected by the Data Protection Act 1998)
- Information divulged with the expectation of confidentiality
- Business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Commercially sensitive information
- Politically sensitive information

3.4 Use of social media should adhere to regulations set out to protect individuals and organisations from libel, defamation, harassment and breach of copyright. These statutory instruments include:

- The Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003
- Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988

### 4.0 RELATED POLICIES

4.1 This Policy does not stand in isolation and is supported and compliant with wider school policy. Most significantly this policy supports and is aligned with:

- Acceptable Staff Usage of ICT Policy – Issued in 2011 by Cognita Schools as standard for all schools
- School E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement (pupils) – distributed to all staff in September 2013 and available through the staff handbook.
- School Anti-Bullying Policy and related policies
- Policies for securing parental consent for appearing in online publications

### 5.0 PRINCIPLES FOR CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHALF OF LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

5.1 - Be Purposeful, Consistent And Fair

5.2 Before creating social media accounts, staff are expected to be clear on the purpose and intentions of the site, the intended scope, content and longevity of the site, use clear school branding and ensure that appropriate parental consent is held.

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- 5.3 Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purposes for using social media and a clear statement of intent should be given.
- 5.4 The proposed audience and level of interactive engagement with the site should be set out at the outset to the school lead team. For example details are required on whether pupils, school staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the site and how posts will be moderated. See Appendix for a Proposal Form
- 5.5 The regularity of content posting should be set out and adhered to. Staff members must consider how much time they are able to commit to the proposed site. They should be aware that maintaining a site is not a one-off task, but involves a considerable time commitment.
- 5.6 The lead team must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the site refreshed and relevant. It is important that enough staff members are trained and are able to maintain and moderate a site in case of staff absences or turnover.
- 5.7 There must be a careful exit strategy and a clear plan from the outset about how long the site will last. It must not be neglected, creating a potential risk to the school's brand and image.
- 5.8 Consideration must be given to how school branding, logos and related images will be used on the site so it is consistent with other school publications.
- 5.9 Consideration must also be given to how the success of the site will be evaluated to assess whether the site has achieved the proposed objectives.
- 5.10 To guide these considerations and long term maintenance and evaluation of the site a Proposal Form and Running Record are given in the appendix**

## 6.0 PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHALF OF LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

- 6.1 - Be Professional , Responsible And Respectful
- 6.2 Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of Long Close School.
- 6.3 It is expected that staff maintain a separate outlet for conducting personal and professional online interchanges. Staff should not put themselves into a situation where there is a conflict of interest between work for the school and personal interests.
- 6.4 Staff must not engage in activities involving social media which may bring Long Close School or the associated bodies into disrepute. Staff must also not represent their personal views as the views of Long Close School on any social media or web platform.
- 6.5 It is prohibited to:
- Discuss personal information about pupils, the School, or other staff on social media
  - Use social media to attack, insult, or defame any pupils, family members, colleagues, associated organisations, or the School
- 6.6 All social media use must be accurate, fair, transparent, and professional when representing the School.
- 6.7 At all times, posts should adhere to parental consent. Ensure that you have parental consent before posting images (If a parent has refused to have their child photographed or have those photographs posted, it is imperative that all staff respect that preference and are fully informed of these cases)
- 6.8 Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with each other, unless otherwise agreed.
- 6.9 It is important to be careful when posting pupil information online. To ensure personal information is not unwittingly shared and that posts remain within the purpose of the site these guidelines should be adhered to:
- Do not use the pupil's full name in posts. Avoid naming or listing pupils in photographs and if giving a pupil name is unavoidable this should be first name only. Using the class, group or

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year name is accepted practice.

- Avoid posting images of individual pupils unless talking about an individual achievement obliges you to do so.
  - Tagging or captioning images with pupil names (or staff and parent names) should be avoided and any tags applied by a contributor (e.g. a parent tagging their child's photo) should be removed. It should be explained to parents that this is not school policy as appropriate.
  - Every effort should be made to ensure balance and fairness in coverage: this includes balanced reports on sporting or competitive activities, equal representation of all pupils within a timeframe and reference to all groups involved in a profiled activity.
  - Ensure that all links to external sites are appropriate and safe.
  - Any inappropriate comments on or abuse should be removed and a system of moderation should be in place.
  - Do not use private or direct message facilities. Only ever engage with pupils on social media where the messages are public and discourage parents from sending private messages to staff members via the professional account.
  - Do not post images that clearly display parent or teacher car number plates.
  - Only post images and updates that uphold the school reputation and general personality of the school.
  - Use proper spelling and grammar in all updates – if there is a character limitation, explain that it is update 1/2 or 2/2 rather than using text speak.
  - Only post updates that are relevant to the general school following, unless responding to a particular question.
  - Never post in all caps as this is generally accepted as inflammatory or remarks made in anger.
  - Report any negative comments and do not engage in responses to negative comments, seek advice from the lead team before taking appropriate action.
  - It is acceptable to retweet or thank people for positive messages.
  - Information must be worthwhile and accurate.
  - Updates must respect the audience and be sensitive in tone.
  - Personal opinions should not be expressed on official sites.
- 6.10 Staff should not be obliged to provide feedback on a pupil's progress, school performance or any similar information through a social media to any parent or member of the school community. Staff members that are asked or pressured into divulging this form of information should contact the senior lead team for immediate guidance.
- 6.11 If a staff member becomes aware of posts that are in breach of these guidelines they should inform the lead team immediately.
- 6.12 Social media is not and should not be used as a conduit to air grievances, problems or raise issues. If a parent or member of the wider body does so using a social media site, they should be contacted by other means and their complaints should be addressed in accordance to the school complaints policy. It is important that staff report any negative comments on the site to the lead team so that an appropriate response can be initiated.

## 7.0 PERSONAL USE

7.1 Most, if not all, staff will have a personal presence on social media sites and the School does not mean to infringe on this interaction. In order to maintain personal privacy and a healthy distinction between personal and professional lives, it is expected that staff should take all measures to maintain the confidential integrity of their own social media profiles.

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- 7.2 Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of Long Close School in their personal social media. 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.
- 7.3 Staff members should use the maximum available privacy options on social media profiles where they post about their personal lives. Staff should keep their passwords and personal account identification confidential and are expected to not access their personal accounts while on School premises.
- 7.4 When posting from personal profiles, it is important to remember which posts are visible to the public and which are not. Posts on a personal profile with high privacy settings cannot be seen by the general public, but posts in a public group from the same profile can be. Likewise, event photographs posted on venue social media sites are accessible to the general public, including pupils and their parents.
- 7.5 Staff members must not have contact with any pupils either currently or recently enrolled in the school through social media, unless the pupils are family members or have a relationship with the staff that preceded their entry to the School.
- 7.6 Staff members should not have contact with pupils' family members through social media if that contact is likely to create a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity or professional abilities.
- 7.7 Staff should not be obliged to provide feedback on a pupil's progress, school performance or any similar information through personal social media to any parent or member of the school community. Staff members that are asked or pressured into divulging this form of information should contact the senior lead team for immediate guidance.
- 7.8 Staff members must decline friend requests from pupils. It is allowed to discuss these requests and point pupils towards official school accounts, but this discussion must not take place over social media. Staff should also not accept friend request from any ex-pupils under the age of 18.
- 7.9 On leaving the school's service, staff members must not contact school 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.
- 7.10 Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, Cognita staff and other parties and school corporate information must not be discussed on their personal sites.
- 7.11 Limitations placed on the school regarding posting pupil full names and identifying information, as well as photographs, extends to personal social media. 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 school premises must not be published on personal social media.
- 7.12 School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- 7.13 If staff members would like to communicate with pupils via social media sites or to enable pupils to contact each other through private groups, they must seek the approval of the school and do so using professional social media.
- 7.14 If any staff member is aware of inappropriate communication it must be reported immediately to the lead team as sensitively appropriate. Matters that are considered to be safeguarding concerns should be recorded and discussed with the designated school Child Protection officer immediately.

## 8.0 SAFEGUARDING PUPIL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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- 8.1 At Long Close School we seek to promote the positive and educational use of social media and strive to present the opportunities available to pupils through engaging with online social platforms for their own educational and personal development.
- 8.1 The pupils' use of social media and online resources both for school and personal uses are subject to the school E-Safety policy and Acceptable Use of Technology agreement.
- 8.3 Staff should be aware of their duty of care and responsibilities for safeguarding pupils while engaging with social media and provide suitable advice and guidance.
- 8.4 All school staff are expected to be aware of their responsibilities set out in the school E Safety policy and should promote and monitor the acceptable pupil use of technology. Staff should be aware of the channels in which to report any concerns of misconduct.
- 8.5 If a child reports that they are upset, disturbed or feeling bullied or pressured into actions or behaviour by comments on social media, staff should immediately report this to the CPO for further, appropriate and confidential investigations. Responding or investigating these matters using social media is prohibited.
- 8.6 If a child has been adversely affected by exchanges on social media, the school does not expect that the child engages on social media platforms if this can cause further distress.

#### 9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9.1 Long Close School monitors internet usage and email activity without prior notification or authorisation from users.
- 9.2 Users of the School system and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive using the school system or accounts
- 9.3 A record of professional social media should be held by the lead team (see appendix) and regular reviews should be carried out to ensure that social media is being used in accordance with the principles set out in this document.
- 9.4 The school reserves the right to discontinue any professional social media that is found to be unproductive or in conflict with school ethos, without warning.
- 9.4 Breaches of any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action taken against the staff member(s) involved.
- 9.5 The extent of disciplinary action is dependent on the severity of the breach. Consequences can include informal verbal warnings, formal verbal warnings, removal from School social media duties, or further disciplinary action and dismissal.
- 9.6 This policy is reviewed annually

Signed: Brendan Pavey

Head Teacher

Person taking responsibility for monitoring social media is: Brendan Pavey

## Appendix A Social Media Proposal Form

Social Media Creation Proposal Form	
Proposal By:	
Department / Role:	
Purpose of Social Media Site	
What are the aims you propose to achieve by setting up this site?	
What is the proposed content of the site?	
Who will be the main audience of this site?	
Maintenance of site	
Who will be the administrators of the site? 2 minimum are required.	
Who will be able to contribute to the site?	
How will posts be moderated and reviewed?	
Who will host this site?	
Regularity of posts	
When will the site go live?	
How long will the site be active for?	
How often / regularly will new posts be applied?	
Further supporting information	
Please give any further information to support your proposal	
Signature: I have read and will adhere to the school Social Media Policy	

Approval	
Approval by:	
Review by:	
Review date:	

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Appendix B Social Media recording sheet

Name of site:	Administrators:	Approval date:	Key audience:	Date and initial to state this site has been reviewed and has ongoing approval:						
Long Close School Facebook Page	BP	January 2013	Parent body	April 2014	BP	April 2015	BP	April 2016	BP	
Long Close Early Years Facebook Page	JH	October 2012	EYFS parents	April 2014	BP	April 2015	BP	April 2016	BP	

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**Appendix C**

**Long Close School Photograph/Video/ Artwork Consent and Release Form**

Long Close School would like to take photographs and videos of the pupils and parents to use on the school's promotional material such as the prospectus, website and editorial. We may wish to use photographs or videos of the children for other purposes such as class projects. First names will only appear alongside photographs or videos if appropriate and full names will never be used. In order to comply with the Data Protection Act, we require your consent to use the photographs and videos.

Is it not practical to list every possible use but the following list gives some examples:

- Website
- Social media
- Prospectus
- Editorial
- Newspaper Articles
- School directories
- Class projects

**Please complete and sign the form below and return it to the school.**

**I consent /do not consent** (delete as appropriate) for my child's photograph or video image to appear in promotional and other material for the school.

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_