

St John's Church of England Primary School



Social Media Code and Instant Messaging Code of Conduct Policy (for All Members of the School Community)

Finding the light in ourselves and each other
John 8:12

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Statement of intent

St John's Church of England Primary School understands the benefits of using social media. However, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as by damaging the school's reputation. This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect members of the school community to conduct themselves on social media and when using instant messaging apps, such as WhatsApp and Messenger etc.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Defamation Act 2013
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (as amended)

2. E-safety and social media conduct

2.1. St John's Church of England Primary School expects members of the school community to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following behaviour online:

- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow members of the school community, pupils, the school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media

2.2. The school has a **Complaints Procedures Policy** in place, to avoid members of the school community broadcasting grievances online.

2.3. Members of the school community will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking and their conduct online.

2.4. Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution.

2.5. Members of the school community will not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media (unless already a known contact from outside of school).

2.6. Members of the school community are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

- 2.7. St John's Church of England Primary School retains the right to request any damaging material to be removed from social media websites.

3. Messaging

- 3.1. St John's Church of England Primary School expects members of the school community to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the school, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:
- Sending abusive messages to fellow members of the school community (public or private)
 - Sending abusive messages about members of staff, governors, members of the school community, children or the school
 - Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- 3.2. The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging online; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit the school community by keeping the school community closer.
- 3.3. Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting members of the school community directly, to stop any issues continuing.
- 3.4. St John's Church of England Primary School can request a meeting with members of the school community if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.
- 3.5. The school's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent teacher association or governing body cause any discrepancies through their conduct whilst using online messaging.
- 3.6. The headteacher can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively.
- 3.7. The headteacher can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between members of the school community or parental bodies.

4. Uploading Photos and or Videos

- 4.1. The school gives permission for all members of the school community to take photos and video footage of the children at key points in the school day e.g. Celebration Assembly, Sharing Assembly, End of Year Performance and the School Nativity etc.
- 4.2. However, the school does not give permission for these photos and videos to be uploaded to social media, due to the different personal and private circumstances of each family – these are for your personal use only.

4.3. Therefore, if a complaint is received and substantiated that this expectation has been breached then you will be issued with a letter that removes your permission to take photos and videos at all school events.

4.4. If requested, after at least two full terms to have the ban removed this will then be considered by the Headteacher.

4.5. Finally, if a further breach is noted, then this will result in the permanent removal of permission to take photos and videos at all school events.

5. Monitoring and review

4.1. The headteacher will review this code of conduct on a frequent basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and members of the school community.

4.2. All members of the school community will be required to read this code of conduct and sign the updated home-school agreement should any changes be made.

4. References to other school documents

- Home-School Agreement
- Complaints Procedures Policy

Acceptable Use of Social Media and Instant Messaging Letter

Dear Members of the school community and Carers,

RE: Members of the school community' use of social media and instant messaging platforms

St John's Church of England Primary School understands and appreciates the benefits of social media and instant messaging; however, whilst there are many positive benefits to using social media; there may also be some significant negative impacts, such as cyber bullying, which the school does not tolerate.

In order for us to set the best example possible to pupils at St John's Church of England Primary School, we expect all members of the school community to do the same. The school urges members of the school community to review this policy and to note our home-school agreement, which outlines how to act when using social media.

Should St John's Church of England Primary School be subject to any media abuse, we will take the appropriate action, which may include considering our legal options to deal with and defamatory or libellous activity on such platforms.

If any members of the school community do have any concerns to make, or would like to discuss this subject further, please contact myself directly by making an appointment with the School Office.

Yours sincerely

Simon Horleston
Headteacher