Beachborough School

Social Media Policy

Updated: September 2026

Date of next Review: September 2027

Policy Lead: Chris Rodd (IT Manager) & Ms SJ Lapper (Deputy Head - DSL)

Reviewed by: Mrs S Mitchell (Head)

A social networking site is any website which enables its users to create profiles, form relationships and share information with other users. It also includes sites which have online discussion forums, chatrooms, media posting sites, blogs and any other social space online. It includes but is not limited to, sites such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X, Flickr, Snap and TikTok. It is not intended to affect your ability to use LinkedIn for purely professional purposes.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff or any other IT equipment.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details so far as this is consistent with the right of an individual to private and family life.

Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Implementation of the policy:

The Head has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy but has delegated day to day responsibility for its operation to IT manager and Bursar.

All staff have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy and if necessary, enforcing this policy by acting when colleague's behaviour falls below its requirements.

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media and questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the IT manager and Bursar.

Relationship with other School policies:

If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:

- Breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies.
- Breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality.
- Breach our Disciplinary Rules.
- Defame or disparage the school or our affiliates, parents, staff, pupils, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders.
- Harass or bully other staff in any way or breach our anti-bullying policy.
- Unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties or breach our Equal Opportunities policy.
- Breach our Data Protection policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague, pupil or parent online).
- Breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

Behaviour online can be permanent, and so staff must be extra cautious about what they say as it can be harder to retract.
Staff must also be aware of the risks to internet security that social media presents. To comply with the existing school policy on internet security, staff must take extra measures necessary not to allow any of their actions on social media sites to create vulnerability to any school systems.
Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
As part of the school's safer recruitment procedures, online searches may be conducted on shortlisted candidates in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's Recruitment and Selection Policy.

Responsible use of social media:

Staff must be aware that their role comes with responsibilities, and they must adhere to the school's strict approach to social media.

Staff must:

- Staff must immediately report any online content, communication, behaviour or concern relating to a child that may indicate abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, grooming, bullying, self-harm, harmful sexual behaviour or any other safeguarding risk to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ensure that wherever possible their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that pupils cannot access information relating to their personal lives.
- Obtain the prior written approval of the Head, to the wording of any personal profile which you intend to create where the school is named or mentioned on a social networking site.
- Ensure that they have signed the Beachborough Personal Devices document.
- Seek approval from the Head before they speak about or make any comments on behalf of the school on the internet or through any social networking site.
- Report any misuse on the internet or on social networking sites that disparages or reflects poorly on the school.
- Immediately remove any internet postings which are deemed by the school to constitute a breach of this or any other school policy.
- Consider whether a particular posting puts their effectiveness as a teacher at risk.
- Post only what they want the world to see.
- Staff are strongly encouraged to maintain separate professional and personal online identities.

Staff must not:

- Provide references for other individuals, on social or professional networking sites, as such references whether positive or negative can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school.
- Post or publish on the internet or on any social networking site, any reference to the school, your colleagues, parents or pupils.
- Use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Staff must exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterisations.
- Discuss pupils or colleagues or publicly criticise the school or staff.
- Post images that include pupils, unless using a school device, logged in with a school approved social media policy.
- Initiate friendships with pupils on any personal social network sites.

- Accept pupils as friends on any such sites; staff must decline any pupil-initiated friend requests.
- Staff should not engage with current parents through personal social media accounts.
- Staff must only communicate with pupils through school-approved communication systems, platforms and social media accounts authorised by the Head and monitored in accordance with school procedures.

Online Safety and Safeguarding:

The school recognises that online activity and social media may present safeguarding risks to children. Staff must remain vigilant to indicators of:

- online grooming
- child-on-child abuse
- cyberbullying
- exploitation
- radicalisation
- misuse of AI-generated content
- sharing of indecent or harmful material

Concerns must be reported in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Personal use of social media:

We recognise that staff may work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. We authorise such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity.
While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the organisation's business are also prohibited.

Staff must ensure that their use of social media does not create any breaches of internet security and therefore must be careful to avoid any applications that might interrupt our IT systems. Excessive use of social media that interrupts staff productivity will be subject to a disciplinary procedure, consistent with this policy.

Staff are prohibited from using their work email address for any personal use of social media.

The monitoring of social media:

The contents of our IT resources and communication systems are our property. The school may monitor use of its IT systems for legitimate business, safeguarding, security, legal and regulatory purposes in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's privacy notices.

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.

We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.

Social media and the end of employment:

If an employee's employment with our school should end, for whatever reason, any personal profiles on social networking sites should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that they are no longer employed or associated with our school.
All professional contacts that a member of staff has made through their course of employment with us belong to our school, regardless of whether the member of staff has made social media connections with them.

This policy applies across the whole school including Boarding and EYFS and will be reviewed and updated regularly. ***Linked Policies and read in conjunction with:*** *Acceptable Usage, Safeguarding, Taking and Use of images, Anti-bullying, Equal Opportunities, Internet Safety (Online), Boarding, Staff Code of Conduct, Data Protection, Safer Recruitment, Code of Conduct, Low Level Concerns.*