

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY INCLUDING TWITTER

Policy Update: September 2021

Next Review: September 2024

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
SOCIAL MEDIA & TWITTER POLICY

Woodlands Primary School recognises that many staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils use the internet for personal purposes and that they may participate in social networking on social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube etc. In addition, staff, governors, parents and carers may set up personal weblogs or 'blogs' on the internet, such as Twitter pages.

Whilst staff, governors, parents and carers are free to use the internet in this way - in relation to the school, they must ensure that they do not:

- knowingly breach the law or disclose confidential information
- knowingly breach copyright
- defame or damage the good name and reputation of the school, its staff, governors, parents, carers and pupils
- disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998 or Woodlands E-Safety policy

They must keep completely confidential any information regarding the children, their families or other staff which is learned through the school.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of staff, governors, parents and carers setting up personal websites and blogs and using social networking websites.

Woodlands Primary School currently has a Twitter account for each class (EYFS have one collective page), a Twitter account on behalf of the school dog, Gus – run by HT & DHT, a Twitter account to showcase Co-Jo's that all class teachers have access to. This policy relates to material posted on public areas.

SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINITION

Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums (message boards), weblogs (blogs), microblogging (Twitter, Reddit), social networks (Facebook, Myspace, etc), podcasts, photographs or pictures, video and virtual game worlds (Moshi Monsters, Club Penguin, Roblox etc.).

WEBSITES AND BLOGS

The following guidelines apply:

- Staff, governors, parents and carers must not disclose any information that is confidential to the school or any third party that has disclosed information to the school.
- Staff, governors, parents and carers should not link any personal websites, social networking sites etc to the school's website.
- Staff, governors, parents and carers must not use the school website, internet systems, e-mail addresses or intranet for their own personal use.
- If a member of staff, governor, parent or carer is asked to contribute to an official web page, blog or social media site connected to the school, then special rules will apply and they will

be told in detail how to operate and what to write by a member of the senior leadership team.

- Woodlands Primary School will not tolerate criticisms through social media websites and blogs. If a member of staff feels aggrieved then they must follow the procedures outlined in the Complaints and Whistleblowing Policy.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The school respects a member of staff's right to a private life. However; the school must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected.

The school expects all staff and governors to:

- Ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the school either on locked or public accounts.
- Take care not to allow their interaction on social media to damage working relationships between members of staff and stakeholders of the school.
- Conducts themselves professionally when interacting with school based social media accounts and when interacting with the general public, whilst using their personal social media accounts.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

When writing a weblog and placing information on social networking sites, staff, governors, parents and carers should follow these guidelines:

- Staff should only comment positively on any posts made by others relating to the school.
- Staff should only share and discuss positive matters relating to the school.
- Staff should take care when 'liking' Woodlands Facebook page, as this may then share their own personal page with others.
- Staff should use the highest level of privacy settings available.
- Staff should behave respectfully and should not engage in objectionable or inflammatory conversations publicly.
- Do not include any information that breaches copyright (where known); link to other material rather than cutting and pasting it, where possible.
- Do not defame (libel) anyone. A member of staff, governor, parent or carer who makes a defamatory statement that is published on the internet may be legally liable for any damage to the reputation of the individual concerned.
- Do not include personal information about an individual without his/her consent, otherwise they risk breaching the Data Protection Act 1998, which is a criminal offence.
- Do not include material that is abusive, defamatory, sexist, racist, or that could be interpreted as harassment or bullying.
- Do not bring Woodlands Primary School into disrepute.
- It is not advisable to invite parents/carers to become your friends on social networking sites. There may be a conflict of interest and security and privacy issues, but where relationships

are already established, staff should proceed with caution, being fully aware of the social media guidelines and the teacher's code of conduct.

- Staff should not accept friend requests or follow requests from Woodlands pupils under any circumstances. If a child interacts with social media in any way, they must be blocked, reported, and logged on CPOMS.
- Staff should not share personal conversation, except with permission.
- Staff should not interact with parents via private or direct message on Twitter. This should be logged on CPOMS and reported. Any replies that are required should be sent via the appropriate channels (phone call or email).

CYBER BULLYING

Woodlands Primary School is committed to ensuring that all of its staff, parents/carers and pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Cyber-bullying methods could include text messages, emails, phone calls, instant messenger services, circulating photos or video clips or by posting comments on web sites, blogs or in chat rooms. Personal blogs that refer to disparagingly to colleagues without their consent is also unacceptable. Staff, governors, parents and carers who cyber-bully could also face criminal prosecution under various laws, including the Malicious Communications Act 1988.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If necessary, action will be taken against any member of staff, governor, parent or carer who is found to have breached this Policy. Staff should also refer to the Disciplinary Policy.

SECURITY AND IDENTITY THEFT

Staff, governors, parents and carers should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if they are part of a 'network'. Staff, governors, parents and carers should not assume that their entries on any website will remain private.

Staff, governors, parents and carers must also be security conscious and should take steps to protect themselves from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that they give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and, for example, favourite football team which can form the basis of security questions and passwords.

TWITTER

Rationale

In the technology rich world that our pupils, parents and the wider community live in, social media is becoming more and more part of daily life. It is important therefore that staff at Woodlands Primary School embrace Twitter to not only keep up to date with important changes that can impact learning in their classroom but also to be outward facing, connecting with teachers across the globe, nation and local area who are sharing resources, ideas and discussing important aspects of education, but to celebrate our school.

This policy will explain acceptable use of Twitter relating to Woodlands Primary School individual class Twitter accounts, e.g. @6imwoodlands or @4ldwoodlands. The policy will explain the purpose of Twitter in Woodlands Primary School and the benefits that will arise from its acceptable use.

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a social media tool that currently has no age restrictions for its use (although it is recommended for ages 13 and over). Twitter is used to communicate thoughts and ideas within 140 characters and usually references people, places and activities that tend to invite replies. Twitter accounts can follow other Twitter accounts or be followed by other Twitter accounts and all tweets are public. Users are able to Direct Message (DM) other users should they wish something not to be made for public viewing.

The reason Woodlands Primary School and staff will be using Twitter is twofold:

1. To share and showcase the learning at Woodlands Primary School with a wider audience
2. To involve the wider community in the life of the school

Twitter can be used to engage with individual parents directly in response to tweets sent in, but is primarily for important announcements and notices being sent as part of general communication to parents.

Pupils at Woodlands Primary School will be asked not to comment on the Twitter account.

The Woodlands Primary School Accounts

Individual Twitter accounts will be registered to class emails, e.g. 3pb@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk. We will also have a 'Commando Joe's' account specifically to share this aspect of our curriculum. Passwords used for each Twitter account will be kept with I Moore to ensure accountability and ability to monitor what is shared.

Twitter Etiquette

Any Tweets from the official school account will be grammatically correct but may use some informal language such as lol, gr8. Some tweets may contain hashtags. A hashtag is a label or type of metadata tag used on social media, such as #WoodlandsInfants #WoodlandsJuniors that enable tweets to be added to a collection of other related tweets that are generally viewed by more people. If tweets are being sent to spread the news of an event/website, they could look something like this:



In this tweet you can see a request to view a new blog post and the hashtag #edchat

Safeguarding Pupils

In order to safeguard the pupils at Woodlands Primary School, **no names of pupils will be used alongside any images of pupils of next to a pupil's work**. Woodlands Primary School seeks photographic consent of all the parents before publishing photographs of pupils. Tweets sent by Woodlands Primary School will adhere to this list.

Photograph guidelines for individual and whole-school Twitter profiles:

- Photos of children's work/work in exercise books with no names showing
- Any Photos of children tweeted will not name the child – anonymous photos will be of those children who have permission granted by parents/carers

Who can follow Woodlands Primary School?

Anyone can follow the school's Twitter accounts. Monitoring checks will take place by a member of the school team to check recent followers. Any user following the school account that is deemed unsuitable or not adding any value to the school will be blocked. A member of the school team will make this decision on a case-by-case basis. Parents will be encouraged to follow the official school account to receive the information the school is posting up to Twitter.

Parents are able to follow the school Twitter account. They will be approved/blocked by a member of staff on a case-by-case basis. In no circumstances should pupils be allowed to follow or comment on the school twitter account. Should this happen, the staff are to block the pupil and inform a member of the SLT at their earliest convenience.

Handover of Twitter accounts

At the end of the academic year, the Twitter name and associated email of each class will change according to who the next teacher of the class will be (exception for those in mixed classes – these will be deactivated in line with GDPR regulations). For example, 5imwoolands could change to 6ltwoodlands, and the corresponding email could change from 5im@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk to 6lt@woodlands.cheshire.sch.uk.

Once the children leave school, their corresponding class Twitter account will be deactivated to remove all photographs and comments on their work throughout their time at Woodlands in line with GDPR regulations.

What is inappropriate content and referencing and how will it be dealt with?

Woodlands Primary School welcomes referencing, interaction or mentions.

Woodlands Primary School deems any of the following as inappropriate:

- Offensive language or remarks aimed at the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school
- Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed
- Unsuitable images or content finding its way from another's account into the Woodlands Primary School feed
- Images or text that may infringe upon copyright
- Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school

Any inappropriate content will be reported to Twitter and its users will be blocked. Furthermore, incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority.

Safeguarding pupils/students who are victims of Peer on Peer abuse

There is no clear definition of what peer on peer abuse entails. However, it can be captured in a range of different definitions:

- **Domestic Abuse:** relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and / or financial abuse, and coercive control in their intimate relationships;
- **Child Sexual Exploitation:** captures young people aged under-18 who are sexually abused in the context of exploitative relationships, contexts and situations by a person of any age - including another young person;
- **Harmful Sexual Behaviour:** refers to any young person, under the age of 18, who demonstrates behaviour outside of their normative parameters of development (this includes, but is not exclusive to abusive behaviours);
- **Serious Youth Crime / Violence:** reference to offences (as opposed to relationships / contexts) and captures all those of the most serious in nature including murder, rape and GBH between young people under-18.

Peer on peer abuse can refer to any of the above individually or as a combination, therefore professionals working with children and young people who are experiencing abuse from their peers must respond to the needs of each of the definitions to uncover the level of complexity and respond in the most effective manner. It is possible that a young person may be sexually exploited in a gang related situation by their boyfriend or girlfriend.

Key Areas Where Peer on Peer Abuse Occurs

Bullying (including Cyberbullying)

Bullying is defined as “behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. Bullying often starts with trivial events and it is behaviour that hurts someone else - such as name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours, threatening or undermining someone; mocking; making offensive comments; taking belongings; inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; or always leaving someone out of groups. It can happen anywhere - at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. A child that is being bullied can feel like there's no escape because it can happen wherever they are, at any time of day or night.

There are many different forms of bullying:

- **‘Cyberbullying’:** involves sending inappropriate or hurtful text messages, emails or instant messages, posting malicious material online (e.g. on social networking websites) or sending or posting offensive or degrading images and videos;
- **Racist and Religious Bullying:** A range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status;
- **Sexual, Sexist and Transphobic Bullying:** includes any behaviour, whether physical or nonphysical, where sexuality is used as a weapon by boys or girls;
- **Homophobic Bullying:** targets someone because of their sexual orientation (or perceived sexual orientation);
- **Disablist Bullying:** targets a young person solely based on their disability, this can include manipulative bullying where a perpetrator forces the victim to act in a certain way, or exploiting a certain aspect of the victim's disability.

It is important to remember that bullying can also be a combination of the above. There has been much media attention surrounding children and young people who have

committed suicide due to being bullied. Professionals must understand the damaging and at times fatal effects bullying can and does have on children and young people and be able to respond to it effectively

Safeguarding pupils/students who are victims of the sharing of nudes or semi-nude images/videos

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting', there is no clear definition of 'sexting'. Many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.' When young people are asked "What does sexting mean to you?" they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know'. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

This only covers the sharing of sexual imagery by young people. Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of under-18s is illegal and therefore causes the greatest complexity for schools and other agencies when responding. It also presents a range of risks which need careful management.

On this basis current advice introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' and uses this instead of 'sexting.' This is to ensure clarity about the issues current advice addresses.

'Youth produced sexual imagery' best describes the practice because:

- 'Youth produced' includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves.
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent.' A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos (and this is what is meant by reference to imagery throughout the document).

The types of incidents which this covers are:

- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18
- A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult
- A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18

For the best way to respond to these issues, staff should read the following advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

Reviewed: September 2021

This policy/document was reviewed by:

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