GREAT CHART PRIMARY SCHOOL

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

September 2021

Our vision is to create a school community where children participate, succeed and are proud of their achievements. We strive to actively promote British values and prepare our children to become role models, thus preparing them for life in modern Britain

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, what app) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube have social media elements to them.

Great Chart Primary School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and pupils/students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by Great Chart Primary School, its staff, parents, carers and children.

This policy is subject to the school's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements. It applies to:

- Applies to all staff and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school.
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education

The school respects privacy and understands that staff and pupils/students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

- **The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.**
- **Employees must ensure that their online presence / profile is compatible with their professional role.**

    All Employees should:

- Ensure appropriate privacy settings are applied when using social media sites
- Refrain from sharing confidential / privileged information ,discussing incidents, operational or employment matters or making critical / negative comments about the School / pupils / parents or colleagues on such forums
- Profile information must not link them to the school
- Not browse, create, transmit, display, publish or forward any material / images which is illegal, could offend or harass or anything which could bring an Employee's professional role or the School / Local Authority into disrepute
- Never share / post images of pupils
- Not post images of work colleagues without permission
- Not access or update social media sites using school devices. The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites (using personal devices) during staff break times only. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.*
- Employees should not make contact with pupils or parents via social media accounts or have these individuals as social media 'friends' / 'contacts'. It is also recommended that Employees do not have ex- pupils or their families as social media 'friends'.
- Employees should seek guidance from their Headteacher / Manager if they are unclear about the conduct or actions expected of them.

- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media, staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites during staff break times only. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken.*
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

- **Pupil/Students**
  - Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.
  - Staff should think carefully when accepting parents as 'friends' on social media sites. Only accept invites from parents that you have a prior relationship with. The Headteacher has the right to question online relationships with parents at the school.
  - The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- **Parents/Carers**
  - If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform or social media site where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
  - The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
  - Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school
- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.

- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Managing your personal use of Social Media:
- "Nothing" on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a Twitter account, or a "Friends of the school" Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the School Leadership Team which covers the following points:-
- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring
School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently (preferably 7 days a week, including during holidays). Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Managing school social media accounts
The Do's
- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author

- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts
- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Great Chart Primary School does not discourage staff and students from using such services. However, all should be aware that the school will take seriously any occasions where the services are used inappropriately. If occasions arise of what might be read to be online bullying or harassment, these will be dealt with in the same way as other such instances.

Information on the Great Chart Primary School's acceptable use of technology can be found in the Online Policy.