Addison Gardens
Blythe Road
London W14 0DT

Addison Primary School

Social Media Policy

Approved

Autumn 2026

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1. Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. Some with the widest use are TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and new/emerging platforms.

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our school's reputation and expectations of professional conduct.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school

3. SCOPE

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, staff, governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity. The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the school representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs, for example Blogger
- Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- Collaborative spaces, such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

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4. **Use of Social networking sites in worktime**

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher.

5. **Social Networking as part of School Service**

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher or a member of the SLT first.

School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally-facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not.

Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Addison Primary expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

6. **Guidance/protection for staff (including trainee teachers), governors and volunteers**

The school expects all staff, governors and volunteers to consider the safety of pupils and colleagues and the risks (reputational and financial) to the school when using social media channels, including when doing so in a personal capacity. Staff, governors and volunteers are also responsible for checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts.

Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons, including use of social media, in front of pupils throughout the school day except where it is appropriate or necessary (e.g. to set homework, or use multi-factor authentication).

Staff, governors and volunteers will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) in line with the school's child protection policy.

Staff should be aware of online security threats and be cautious when giving out personal information which may compromise their own personal safety and security, or that of another individual in the school community.

When using social media, staff, governors and volunteers must not:

- Use personal accounts to conduct school business
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present
- Give their personal social media information to parents/carers

- Complain about the school, individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Reference or share information about individual pupils, colleagues or parents/carers
- Post images of pupils
- Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school
- Link their social media profile to their work email account
- Use personal accounts during timetabled teaching time except in a professional capacity [delete as appropriate]
- Publish any content which may result in action against the school, e.g. content which breaches data protection obligations
- Publish any content which may bring the school into disrepute, including material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature

Staff, governors and volunteers will report any communication received from current pupils (unless the pupils are family members) on any personal social media accounts to the DSL or a member of the senior leadership team immediately.
Staff, governors and volunteers should not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils. If ongoing communication is required, this should be done via official school channels.

7. **Pupils**

The school recognises that most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement of 13+. However, we are aware that many pupils under this minimum age still actively use social media. Therefore, the expectations and guidelines regarding safe and respectful online behaviour set out in this policy apply to all pupils, regardless of their age.

The school does not allow the use of mobile phones and other smart technology (e.g. smart watches) with similar functionality to mobile phones (including the ability to access social media) throughout the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

The school encourages pupils to be, at all times:

- Respectful towards and about members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Respectful to other pupils and parents/carers

Pupils should not use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff
- Complain about the school. Where a pupil has a complaint or concern, they should share this with the school through the school's official channels, so it can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints policy
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other pupils, parents/carers, or other members of the school community
- Send or post abusive, harassing, misogynistic, or misandrist messages
- Send unwanted sexual comments and messages

- Create or spread rumours about members of staff, pupils, parents/carers, or other members of the school community
- Post images of members of the school community or individuals engaged in school activities without their permission
- Create or share consensual or non-consensual nudes and semi-nudes, including images or videos that are digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence (AI) (e.g. deepfakes)

The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to online abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Any concerns about a pupil's social media use will be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour policy and child protection policy.

8. Parents/carers

The school expects parents/carers to help us model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our pupils.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

- Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times
- Be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers, other pupils and children, and members of the school community
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with in line with the school's complaints procedure

Parents/carers should not use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or pupils
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers, pupils, or members of the school community
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of pupils whilst engaged in school activities who are not their own
- Create or spread rumours about members of staff, pupils, parents/carers, or other members of the school community

We expect parents/carers to follow the above social media expectations when using class WhatsApp groups.

9. Child protection guidance

If the Head Teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above, they should:

- Record the disclosure in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- The matter will be referred to the LADO who will investigate
- If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes

- If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.
- If disclosure is from a child, follow our normal process in our Safeguarding policy until the police investigation has been carried out

10. **Cyber Bullying**

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Addison Primary School protects ourselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access.

Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school.

This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

- A child is receiving taunts on any platform and texts from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution
- A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using a platform or texts. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.

11. Monitoring and review

The school reserves 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, for legitimate business purposes. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

The Head Teacher will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the school.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Adopted: Autumn 2026

Due for Review: Autumn 2028