

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (WHOLE SCHOOL)

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR BARTON ST PETER'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

1. Barton St Peter's Church of England Primary School is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to maintain high standards of education. These tools also enable the school to deliver modern effective services through engagement with the wider school community.
2. Within this scope social media has the ability to fundamentally change and improve service delivery. We aspire through social media to transform delivery through redesign, replacing or complementing existing ways of working and adopting new models of working.
3. We use the term 'social media' to describe any kind of web based tool that you can use for sharing what you know, including but not limited to: blogs, photo's, video's, social networks, mobile phone applications, text, e-mail, digital TV services, wikis, gaming and collaboration tools.
4. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement. It is about sharing and interaction and gives people the opportunity to make their own content, provide feedback, improve services and communicate with others who care about the same place or issue.
5. As the school begins its social media journey it aspires to meet both current and future needs and expectations. The school's use of social media will include:
 - **Communication** – listen to users and their conversation about school issues.
 - **Engagement** – participate in conversations, building dialogue with users through social media.
 - **Employees** – encourage our employees to use social media to support the undertaking of their work duties and where appropriate share what they know and support each other in making the best use of social media
6. This policy will extend to governors and other members of the wider school community as appropriate.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN YOUR WORK

7. The school would like its employees to feel confident when using social media and to achieve meaningful results through these activities. This policy has been developed to help employees understand good practice for online participation and to make clear the standards expected of anyone using social media.
8. This policy is in addition to any professional standards that govern specific areas of work for employees and in addition to all other school policies.

9. This policy should be followed in conjunction with any code of conduct, which describes the standards of conduct and practice that the school's employees should follow. The code is a key element in the employment relationship and therefore an integral part of the contract of employment.
10. Social media should be seen as another communication channel in the same way as telephone and e-mail and therefore the same behaviour and activities should be observed. However it is important to note that unlike telephone and e-mail exchange information posted on a social media site is publicly available.
11. Furthermore each employee using social media for work purposes must receive sufficient training and support.
12. Before using social media you must have received the necessary permission or appropriate delegation, in writing, from your head teacher. This will detail which social media you can access during work time. You should then follow these guiding principles for any social media activities that are part of your work:
 - **Be responsible for your actions**

Remember that you are a representative of the school. Where possible you should disclose your position as a representative of the school but consideration should be given to personal safety when doing so. Using social media on behalf of the school means that you are responsible for your own actions and may be held accountable for these. Conduct that is likely to bring discredit to the school will be dealt with in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.
 - **Be respectful**

Set the tone for online messages and conversation by being polite, open and respectful. Use familiar language and be cordial and professional at all times. You must ensure that you respect people's confidentiality and do not disclose non-public information or the personal information of others. If you are unsure what information is in the public domain then always seek clarification before divulging anything.
 - **Be responsive**

Make an effort to share information and offer insights where appropriate. Put people in touch with someone who can help if you are unable to. Respond to questions and comments in a timely manner, ensuring you meet the users expectations for the type of social media you are using.
 - **Be credible and consistent**

Ensure accuracy of information; be fair, thorough and transparent. Encourage constructive criticism and feedback.
 - **Be confident**

Don't be scared of participating but if in doubt always seek further guidance before doing so. Never publish anything you are unsure about and be confident and clear in what you say.
 - **Be integrated**

Wherever possible, align online participation with the school's website and other offline communications e.g. school magazine/newsletter.

- **Be legal**
Remember that laws relating to defamation, copyright and data protection apply when using social media (other laws may also apply). You should not make statements about other people or companies that could harm their reputation, and you should be careful not to copy the work of another person or company as this could be a breach of copyright laws. Personal information about other people should not be placed on social media as this is their information and any such disclosure of personal information could be a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998. The school can be held liable for your actions so if you are unsure about whether you are acting within the law you should seek further legal clarification.
13. If you need advice about using social media in your work, then get in touch with others who can help you – the sooner the better. You can make good use of the expertise within the school and learn from other people’s experiences.
 14. The school’s social media business accounts are not to be used for personal reasons. Unauthorised entry into the school’s computer systems, unauthorised use of software or breach of the data protection requirements is a breach of the school’s disciplinary rules.

PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

15. It is your own personal choice whether or not you participate in any kind of social media activity in your own time. Whilst the views and opinions you express are your own, as an employee you are still a representative of the school and should be aware that any information that you post about the school cannot be entirely separate from your working life.
16. All employees using social media should be aware that what they say can be accessed around the world within seconds; it may be shared or re-published elsewhere and will continue to be available indefinitely. They should also be mindful that even if information is restricted to your ‘friends’/‘followers’ it is in effect public as you cannot control what they do with any information you post.
17. Employees that make personal use of social media outside of work are advised not to identify their employer or role in order to avoid any confusion as to whether they are speaking as an employee or individual.
18. You are personally responsible for anything you say online. You should follow these guiding principles when using social media in your own time:
 - You should not identify the school when using social media in a personal capacity if doing so would bring discredit to the school. This could include making negative or derogatory remarks (directly or indirectly) about colleagues, your manager or your employer. This is a breach of the school’s disciplinary rules and may invoke action being taken against you.
 - Do not request, or respond to any personal information from a child, ensuring that communication only takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries through the school’s own communication channels.
 - Respect the privacy of others and make sure you don’t publish any information that is confidential.
 - Stay within the legal framework and be aware that defamation, copyright and privacy laws, amongst others, apply.

- Be aware that participating online in a personal capacity may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care.
- Make sure you avoid any misunderstanding about whether you are speaking as a representative of the school or in a personal capacity.
- Add a disclaimer to your blog or social media profile to make it clear that your accounts and views are personal, e.g. *“these views are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of Barton St Peter’s Church of England Primary school”*, if you have identified the school as your employer.

19. If in doubt always seek advice.

REVIEW

20. This code of practice will be reviewed in three years time or sooner if changes in legislation or feedback necessitates.