# Ashfield Junior School

**Inspiring our children to dream big, be extraordinary and to change the world**

# Social Media Policy 2026-2027

**(adopted from the HfL Model Policy)**

Date agreed: September 2026

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## 1. Introduction

The aims of this policy are to:

- enable appropriate use of social networking sites in a safe and secure manner
- safeguard employees in their use of social networking sites and ensure they do not make themselves vulnerable
- minimise the risks to the school through use of social media.

This policy applies to use of social media for business purposes as well as personal use that may affect the school in any way. It covers all employees, consultants, volunteers, and agency workers.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time. The school may also vary this policy as appropriate in any case.

## 2. What is social media?

For the purposes of this policy, social media is any online platform or app that allows parties to publish information, share content and interact with others either to a wide audience or through private conversations, such as private messages.

Social media is the term used for internet-enabled tools used on computers, tablets, smart phones and other smart devises etc to allow people to share information, ideas and views.

## 3. Types of social media

This policy covers all social media platforms, including, but not limited to: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok and message boards. It also includes any website where you can contribute or edit content and instant messaging services i.e., WhatsApp, Snapchat etc.

This policy also applies to any other existing or new social media platform not mentioned, whether internal or external or used on a personal or work devise.

All forms of social media use are covered by this policy, this can include but is not limited to; posting comments, pictures or videos, blogging, using forums, sending private messages, endorsing other people's content, re-tweeting/circulating posts or adding/editing content on a website.

If it can be determined from your account that you work for Ashfield Junior School (either visually, verbally or written), we ask employees to make it clear that any content and views are their own. Confirming this point does not make employees exempt from following this policy.

Please include "these views are my own and not that of my employer" on your profile.

## 4. Personal use of social media within working time

Employees must limit their personal use of social media on their own equipment to rest breaks such as lunch or break times. The use of personal devices must be discreet and not in the presence of pupils and should be used in designated areas away from pupils (e.g. staff room, front of school). Personal use may not interfere with employment responsibilities or productivity and comply with this policy.

## 5. Business use of social media

If an employee is contacted for comments about the school for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the line manager/headteacher, and the employee should not respond without written approval.

## 6. Prohibited use of social media

Employees must avoid making any social media communications that could damage the school's interests or reputation, even indirectly.

The employee should not use social media in a way that breaches any of the school's policies, the law, or any other regulatory requirements

Social media use is permitted as long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with the school or the employee's role or responsibilities.

### 6.1. Inappropriate use

Social media use is permitted as long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with the school or the employee's role or responsibilities. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:

- any content that could be viewed as malicious, abusive, offensive, obscene, threatening, intimidating or contain nudity or images of a sexual nature
- discrimination (e.g., racism, homophobia etc.)
- swearing (both verbal and gestured) any content including explicit lyrics
- making or endorsing harmful or derogatory comments
- any threatening behaviour that may cause harm to others or the interests or reputation of the school
- bullying and harassment
- making false or misleading claims/ statements
- impersonating colleagues or third parties
- posting or sharing information that could jeopardise the school's confidentiality, particularly regarding sensitive school-related topics, such as the school's performance, internal disputes involving pupils, parents or employees
- disparaging the school, its employees or any third party
- sharing sensitive or personal information about the school or employees that should not be discussed or shared or is covered under GDPR i.e., absence information or phone numbers
- endorsing, liking, sharing content that could be offensive, speculative or may cause reputational damage to the school. this includes adding or commending on speculation
- sharing login details or allowing others to post on your behalf
- using your school email address for a personal social media account

- create social media accounts representing the school without prior authorisation
- expressing opinions on behalf of the school or using the school's logo or other trademarks without express authorisation.

These examples include creating, endorsing, liking, posting, retweeting, sharing direct messaging or sending any statements, photo's, videos, audios or messages. They also include speaking and/or lip syncing to other creators' content and any music used.

Employees should never provide professional references or endorsements on behalf of the school for other individuals without the express authority of the Headteacher including on social or professional networking sites. Such references, positive and negative, can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school.

### 6.2. **Safeguarding and social media**

Employees must not abuse their position of School with pupils on social media. Examples of abuse of School include, but not limited to:

- Accepting any former pupil under the age of 18, or any current pupils, as friends, or requesting such friendships
- Communicating personally with pupils
- Posting photographs of pupils on sites not owned by the school
- Commenting about or naming pupils.

If any member of staff becomes aware that they themselves have been/ or another staff member has been speaking to a pupil online, they should raise it to the headteacher or line manager immediately.

### 6.3. **Use of emojis, GIF's and Memes**

Using emojis, GIF's or Memes do have their benefits, however it is important to use them correctly and appropriately.

Employees should be aware that messages and comments that include emojis may affect the way text is read. Emojis may mean different things to different people, the use of them may mean the text is deemed inappropriate.

If an employee chose to use emojis, GIF's or Memes they should ensure they are appropriate and easily understood within the context.

### 6.4. **Absence from work and use of social media**

Use of social media whilst absent can create the impression that staff are well enough to be working. We accept that this is not necessarily the case, but this may be how it is perceived by colleagues and others. Taking this into account we would guide staff to be mindful of their use of social media during absence from work.

## 7. **Guidelines for responsible use of social media**

The employee should make it clear in social media postings that the employee is speaking on the employee's own behalf.

Employees should be respectful to others when making any statement on social media and be aware that the employee is personally responsible for all communications which will be published on the internet for anyone to see. Employees should ensure that they use privacy and access settings whilst being aware that they cannot control the use of their postings by others.

The employee should also ensure any content they post on social media are consistent with the professional image the employee presents to colleagues, pupils and parents.

If the employee is uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, they are advised to refrain from posting it until they have discussed it with their manager.

If the employee becomes aware of social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the school, the employee should contact their Line Manager or the Headteacher.

## 8. **Monitoring**

The school reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review employees use of social media. The school considers valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage include suspicions that the employee has:

- been using social media when they should have been working
- acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.

Monitoring is in the school's legitimate interests and is to ensure that this policy is being complied with.

For further information, please refer to the eSafety and data security policy.

## 9. **Breach of this policy**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The employee may be required to remove any social media content that the school consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Where this policy requires an employee to disclose matters from their personal life the school will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.