



Social Media Policy

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1. Purpose and scope

This policy aims to:

- Set guidelines and rules on the use of school's social media channels
- Establish clear expectations for the way members of the school community engage with each other online
- Support the school's policies on data protection, online safety and safeguarding

Staff, learners and parents/carers are required to read, understand and comply with this social media policy.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or otherwise.

It applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using:

- School IT facilities and equipment
- Equipment belonging to members of staff and learners
- Any other IT/Internet-enabled equipment

All members of the school should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, child protection and safeguarding, safer recruitment, code of conduct and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

1.1 Definition of social media

For the purposes of this document, 'social media' is considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information (including photos and video). This includes group messaging services such as WhatsApp.

1.2 Introduction

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as Facebook to keeping up with other people's lives on Twitter and maintaining pages on internet encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.

While recognising the benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Cann Bridge School staff and contractors are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in the school's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school and Council are safeguarded.

Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

2. Legal Framework

Cann Bridge School is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- the Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality
- the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 2018
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
- School or City Council business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
- Politically sensitive information

Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003, and
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Cann Bridge School and the City Council could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render Cann Bridge School or the City Council liable to the injured party.

2.1 Defamation

Defamation is the act of making a statement about a person or company that is considered to harm reputation, for example by lowering others' estimation of the person or company, or by causing them to lose their rank or professional standing. If the defamatory statement is written down (in print or online) it is known as libel. If it is spoken, it is known as slander. There are exceptions to this – for example, posting a defamatory statement online or recording it on a podcast would both be examples of libel.

Points to note:

- A company may be held responsible for something an employee has written or said if it is on behalf of the company or on a company-sanctioned space including a blog, tweet or website
- Action can also be taken against you for repeating or linking to libellous information from another source. Check carefully before quoting or link to statements from other online sources
- A member should consider whether a statement can be proved before writing or using it (in print or online) – in English law, the onus is on the person making the statement to establish its truth
- A company that provides a forum for blogging can be liable for defamatory statements they host
- Individual members can be held liable by contributing to a defamatory press release, either through preparing a draft of the document, providing a quotation for or issuing a statement

- Speculating or adding the term ‘allegedly’ to online content that links to or repeats defamatory information does not exempt it from the law
- Retweeting, reposting or linking to defamatory content previously shared by others does not exempt you from the law
- You do not have to name an individual to be considered in breach of the law. Providing sufficient information to make an identification or taking your remarks in the context of others that have named an individual may be enough for a claim to be considered
- The way that you respond to any claims of defamation is important too. Often, removal of offending material and an apology can be enough to settle a dispute. Although not tested or applied, it is also worth noting that this principle has been highlighted in cases of social media use in criminal law.
- Discussing the Crown Prosecution Service’s interim Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases involving communications sent via social media (2013), the then Director of Public Prosecutions suggested that deleting offending content and expressing remorse may result in no legal action being taken.

3. Use of official school social media

The school’s official social media channels are as follows:

- www.facebook.com/cannbridgeschool
- www.x.com/Cann_Bridge
- www.youtube.com/channel/UCSKtiAILB9rSUb7bnFCYosg

These accounts are managed by the headteacher. Staff members who have not been authorised by the headteacher to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

If you have suggestions for something you’d like to appear on our school social media channel(s), please speak to a member of the senior leadership team.

3.1 Facebook

The school will post on Facebook:

- Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)
- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of learners and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on Facebook:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people

- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses unless directly related to the school
- Links to staff members' personal accounts

3.2 X (formerly Twitter)

The school posts on X:

- Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes)
- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures)
- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers
- Achievements of learners and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

The school **will not** post on Twitter:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent)
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Messages to specific people
- Political statements

3.3 Moderation

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will delete as soon as reasonably possible:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments
- Comments we consider to be spam
- Personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.
- Posts that advertise commercial activity or ask for donations
- Posts made in error

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users, following the school's complaints policy. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, they will be blocked.

Staff responsible for our social media accounts will also ensure that all content shared on social media platforms is age appropriate for the school community.

3.4 Following other social media users

The school:

- Will only 'like' Facebook pages with a non-commercial interest – being 'liked' by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind

- May follow other users if you follow us on X (formerly Twitter) – being followed by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind

4. Personal use of social media by staff

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

Staff members will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff **must not**:

- Use personal accounts to conduct school business
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, learners or families past or present
- Complain about the school, individual learners, colleagues or parents/carers
- Reference or share information about individual learners, colleagues or parents/carers
- Post images of learners
- 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 social media during timetabled teaching time except in a professional capacity
- You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Cann Bridge School or the City Council into disrepute.
- Cann Bridge School or City Council corporate, service or team logos or brands must not be used or published on personal webspace.

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the staff code of conduct.

Any communication received from current learners (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

Staff should not also do not have contact via personal accounts with past learners (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via official school channels).

Cann Bridge School does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity; for example any employee in paid employment of a parent with a child at Cann Bridge School should only message the parent through the use of an encrypted private messaging service with regard to the work they carry out in direct employment from the parent and not confuse the school and the personal employment.

Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the work place.

Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

5. Personal use of social media by learners

The school encourages learners to

- Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful to other learners and parents/carers
- 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

Learners **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other learners or parents/carers
- Post images of other learners without their permission

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

6. Personal use of social media by parents/carers

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

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 and other learners and children
- 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 learners
- Complain about the school
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers or learners
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of children other than their own

6.1 WhatsApp groups

The school does not endorse any WhatsApp groups and no prior permission has been sought. Any WhatsApp groups set up are not official communication channels endorsed by the school. We will not monitor their use. If any behaviour is brought to the headteachers attention which may breach policies and procedures, action will be taken.

7. Training and awareness

The school provides annual continuous professional development and awareness training to all staff on social media and online safety. We regularly reinforce this training through staff briefings and updates in the Staff Handbook. Additionally, learners receive education on social media use and online safety through the curriculum and activities like Safer Internet Day. Parents are also kept regularly informed about social media and online safety through workshops, our website, and the school newsletter, ensuring they have the knowledge to protect both themselves and their children.

8. Breaches of the policy

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with Cann Bridge School or City Council Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of Cann Bridge School or the City Council or any illegal acts or acts that render Cann Bridge School or the City Council liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal and/or legal action.

Contracted providers of Cann Bridge School or City Council services must inform the relevant school or City Council officer immediately of any breaches of this policy so that appropriate action can be taken to protect confidential information and limit the damage to the reputation of the school and the City Council. Any action against breaches should be according to contractors' internal disciplinary procedures.

Action will be taken in line with the Staff, Governor, Parent Code of Conduct and Behaviour Policy.

9. Monitoring and review

We reserve 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 headteacher 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 annually is recommended.

10. Related policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Parent code of conduct

- Governor code of conduct
- Mobile phone policy
- Online Safety
- Data protection
- Disciplinary policy and procedure

APPENDIX A - Requirements for creating social media sites on behalf of Cann Bridge School

CREATION OF SITES

Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of Cann Bridge School.

Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purposes for using social media and whether the overall investment is likely to be worthwhile for achieving the proposed pedagogical outcome.

The proposed audience and level of interactive engagement with the site, for example whether pupils, school staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the site, must be discussed with the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

Staff members must consider how much time and effort they are willing to commit to the proposed site. They should be aware that maintaining a site is not a one-off task, but involves a considerable time commitment.

The headteacher or relevant managers must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the site refreshed and relevant. It is important that enough staff members are trained and are able to maintain and moderate a site in case of staff absences or turnover.

There must be a careful exit strategy and a clear plan from the outset about how long the site will last. It must not be neglected, creating a potential risk to the school's brand and image.

Consideration must also be given to how the success of the site will be evaluated to assess whether the site has achieved the proposed objectives.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When creating social media sites for children and young people and communicating with them using such sites, staff members must at all times be conscious of their responsibilities; staff must always act in the best interests of children and young people.

When creating sites for children and young people, staff members must be alert to the risks to which young people can be exposed. Young people's technical knowledge may far exceed their social skills and awareness – they may post sensitive personal information about themselves, treat online 'friends' as real friends, be targets for 'grooming' or become victims of cyberbullying.

If children and young people disclose information or display behaviour or are exposed to information or behaviour on these sites that raises safeguarding or other concerns, appropriate authorities must be informed immediately. Failure to do so could expose vulnerable young people to risk of harm.

Staff members must ensure that the sites they create or contribute to for work purposes conform to the ***Good Practice Guidance for the Providers of Social Networking and Other User Interactive Services (Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, 2008)***

Staff members must also ensure that the webspace they create on third party sites comply with the site owner's minimum age requirements (this is often set at 13 years). Staff members must also consider the ramifications and possibilities of children under the minimum age gaining access to the site.

Care must be taken to ensure that content is suitable for the target age group and contributors or 'friends' to the site are vetted.

Careful thought must be given to the profile of young people when considering creating sites for them. For example, the internet may not be the best medium to communicate with vulnerable young people (or indeed any age group) receiving confidential and sensitive services from the school or the City Council. It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, particularly on third-party-hosted sites such as social networking sites, where privacy settings may not be strong enough to prevent breaches of confidentiality, however inadvertent. If in doubt, you must seek advice from your Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

APPROVAL FOR CREATION OF OR PARTICIPATION IN WEBSITE

Cann Bridge School social media sites can be created only by or on behalf of the school. Site administrators and moderators must be Cann Bridge School employees or other authorised people.

Approval for creation of sites for work purposes, whether hosted by the school or hosted by a third party such as a social networking site, must be obtained from the staff member's line manager, the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

Approval for participating, on behalf of Cann Bridge School, on sites created by third parties must be obtained from the staff member's line manager, the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

Content contributed to own or third-party hosted sites must be discussed with and approved by the staff member's line manager and the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

The school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager) must be consulted about the purpose of the proposed site and its content. In addition, the Headteacher's (or appropriate manager's) approval must be obtained for the use of the school logo and brand.

Staff must complete the Social Media Site Creation Approval Form (Appendix B) and forward it to the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager) before site creation.

Be aware that the content or site may attract media attention. All media enquiries must be forwarded to the headteacher (or appropriate manager) immediately. Staff members must not communicate with the media without the advice or approval of the head teacher (or appropriate manager).

CONTENT OF WEBSITE

Cann Bridge School hosted sites must have clearly expressed and publicised Terms of Use and House Rules. Third-party hosted sites used for work purposes must have Terms of Use and House Rules that conform to the school or City Council standards of professional conduct and service.

Staff members must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of Cann Bridge School or the City Council without authorisation.

Information provided must be worthwhile and accurate; remember what is published on the site will reflect on the school's or City Council's image, reputation and services.

Stay within the law and be aware that child protection, privacy, data protection, libel, defamation, harassment and copyright law may apply to the content of social media.

Staff members must respect their audience and be sensitive in the tone of language used and when discussing topics that others may find controversial or objectionable.

Permission must be sought from the relevant people before citing or referencing their work or referencing service providers, partners or other agencies.

Cann Bridge School hosted sites must always include the school logo or brand to ensure transparency and confidence in the site. The logo should, where possible, link back to the relevant page on the school website.

Staff members participating in Cann Bridge School hosted or other approved sites must identify who they are. They must disclose their positions within the school on these sites.

Staff members must never give out their personal information such as home contact details or home email addresses on these sites.

Personal opinions should not be expressed on official sites.

CONTRIBUTORS AND MODERATION OF CONTENT

Careful consideration must be given to the level of engagement of contributors – for example whether users will be able to add their own text or comments or upload images.

Sites created for and contributed to by pupils must have the strongest privacy settings to prevent breaches of confidentiality. Pupils and other participants in sites must not be able to be identified.

The content and postings in Cann Bridge School hosted sites must be moderated. Moderation is the responsibility of the team that sets up or initiates the site.

The team must designate at least two approved Administrators whose role it is to review and moderate the content, including not posting or removal of comments which breach the Terms of Use and House Rules. It is important that there are enough approved moderators to provide cover during leave and absences so that the site continues to be moderated.

For third-party-hosted sites such as social networking sites used for work purposes, the responsibility for protection and intervention lies first with the host site itself. However, different sites may have different models of intervention and it is ultimately the responsibility of the staff member creating the site to plan for and implement additional intervention, for example in the case of content raising child safeguarding concerns or comments likely to cause offence.

Behaviour likely to cause extreme offence, for example racist or homophobic insults, or likely to put a young person or adult at risk of harm must never be tolerated. Such comments must never be posted or removed immediately and appropriate authorities, for example the Police or Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), informed in the case of illegal content or behaviour.

The school will only allow known individuals to be 'friends' on a site and these must be checked carefully before they are approved. Their comments must be reviewed regularly and any that do not comply with the House Rules must not be posted or removed.

Any proposal to use social media to advertise for contributors to sites must be approved by the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

Approval must also be obtained from the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager) to make an external organisation a 'friend' of the site.

APPENDIX B – Social Media Site Creation Approval Form

Cann Bridge School

Social Media Site Creation Approval Form

Use of social media on behalf of Cann Bridge School must be approved prior to setting up sites.

Please complete this form and forward it to the school's Headteacher (or appropriate manager).

TEAM DETAILS	
Department	<input type="text"/>
Name of author of site	<input type="text"/>
Author's line manager	<input type="text"/>
PURPOSE OF SETTING UP SOCIAL MEDIA SITE (please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site)	
What are the aims you propose to achieve by setting up this site? What is the proposed content of the site?	<input type="text"/>
PROPOSED AUDIENCE OF THE SITE Please tick all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils of Cann Bridge School (provide age range) <input type="checkbox"/> Cann Bridge School staff <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils from other schools (provide names of schools) <input type="checkbox"/> External organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public <input type="checkbox"/> Others; please provide details <input type="text"/>	
PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SITE Please tick all that apply.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cann Bridge School (provide age range) <input type="checkbox"/> Cann Bridge School staff <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils' family members <input type="checkbox"/> Pupils from other schools (provide names of schools) <input type="checkbox"/> External organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Members of the public <input type="checkbox"/> Others; please provide details <input type="text"/>	
ADMINISTRATION OF THE SITE	

Names of administrators (the site must have at least 2 approved administrators)	
Names of moderators (the site must have at least 2 approved moderators)	
Who will vet external contributors?	
Who will host the site?	Cann Bridge School Third party; please give host name
Proposed date of going live	
Proposed date for site closure	
How do you propose to advertise for external contributors?	
If contributors include children or adults with learning disabilities how do you propose to inform and obtain consent of parents or responsible adults?	
What security measures will you take to prevent unwanted or unsuitable individuals from contributing or becoming 'friends' of the site?	

APPROVAL

(approval from relevant people must be obtained before the site can be created. The relevant managers must read this form and complete the information below before final approval can be given by the headteacher).