



Hillcross Primary School

School Community Social Media Policy

Mission, Vision and Culture

Think, Nurture, Thrive and Be Proud!

Our bespoke, ambitious and child-led curriculum combined with our outstanding practice creates opportunities for all children to achieve success and meet their full potential, both personally and academically. As a nationally recognised Thinking School and a Rights Respecting Gold School, we nurture an empathetic community of creative, respectful, curious and independent thinkers and provide opportunities for our children to develop their unique talents and skills. We pride ourselves in our dedication to fostering positive wellbeing, celebrating diversity and promoting a culture of environmental awareness and responsibility.

Through our school culture of Collaboration, Consistency, Challenge and Celebration, and by promoting the values of Aspiration, Courage, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility, we empower a resilient school community of compassionate, responsible global citizens, committed to making the world a better place.

1. Purpose of the policy

The 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, students 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 pupils
- 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 in private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with the school's equalities, harassment, child protection, safer recruitment, and online safety and ICT acceptable use policies.

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.



Hillcross Primary School

2. Use of Official School Social Media

The school's official social media channel is Instagram: [@hillcrossprimary](#)

These accounts are managed by the Senior Leadership Team. 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.

The school will post:

- 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 pupils and staff
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals
- Invitations to provide feedback

If you have suggestions for something you'd like to appear on our school social media channel, please speak to the Senior Leadership Team.

The school **will not** post:

- 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

The school:

[Will only 'like' Instagram posts with a non-commercial interest – being 'liked' by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind.](#)

[May follow other users on Instagram – being followed by us doesn't imply endorsement of any kind](#)

3. Personal Use of Social Media by Staff

The school expects all staff (including governors and volunteers) to consider the safety of pupils 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**:



Hillcross Primary School

- Use personal accounts to conduct school business
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with, pupils past or present
- 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 social media during timetabled teaching time.

Staff should be aware of both professional and social boundaries and should not therefore accept or invite 'friend' requests from parents on their personal social media accounts. All communication with parents via social media should be through the school's communication systems.

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 and Acceptable Use Policies.

Any communication received from current pupils (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 have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using official school channels).

4. Personal Use of Social Media by Pupils

The school encourages pupils to:

- Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times
- Be respectful to other pupils 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

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

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

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

5. 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 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 and other pupils and children



Hillcross Primary School

- 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 or pupils
- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents
- Post images of children other than their own

5.1 Informal Parent WhatsApp groups

Parental WhatsApp groups, especially Year Group ones, have replaced the traditional 'class rep' system and are a fantastic way for parents to support each other practically such as reminders about school deadlines, clarification on routines and procedures and even to get a small frustration off your chest - a problem shared is a problem at least halved and very often someone will have the missing piece of information that helps to explain or resolve the issue raised. These groups can also be very useful ways of supporting each other on a more personal level – most people don't have time to stop and chat or to arrange 'coffee catch ups' on a regular basis anymore and this would have been the time when you find out which shop sells the most robust school shoes at the most reasonable rate, or how to buy a Hillcross water bottle. To ensure everyone can benefit, please be as inclusive as you can if you are involved in setting up an Year Group WhatsApp group.

Whilst we recognise the benefits of WhatsApp Groups, the school cannot take responsibility for them. These informal groups are not monitored so please be mindful about the messages being posted – is the message appropriate for the forum?

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

6. Training and Awareness

All new staff (including governors and volunteers) are asked to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction. This is revisited and/or changes communicated via regular staff briefing sessions or staff training opportunities.

Children in Year 5 take part in a workshop led by an organisation called Growing Against Violence (G.A.V). The workshop explores how digital technology has changed the way people communicate. It explores the relationship young people have with social media and why smart phones/tablets are integral to young people's lives. The session considers the children's use of social media in a more in-depth way, using critical thinking and consideration of their online decision-making. Issues relating to social media, grooming, cyber bullying, gaming and inappropriate images are examined and the children are made aware of the law surrounding these issues and how to report abuse if they encounter it.

Growing Against Violence (G.A.V). also lead a workshop for parents and carers to explore issues, discussing valuable information and practical strategies relating to social media, sexting, online grooming, gangs, and serious youth violence. This workshop offers parents and carers an opportunity to meet other parents/carers, allowing them to share and discuss concerns.



Hillcross Primary School

7. Breaches of this policy

Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy (or if complaints are received about unacceptable use of social networking that has potentially breached this policy) will be investigated in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure. The member of staff will be expected to cooperate with the school's investigation which may involve:

Handing over relevant passwords and login details.

Printing a copy or obtaining a screenshot of the alleged unacceptable content.

Determining that the responsibility or source of the content was in fact the member of staff.

The seriousness of the breach will be considered including the nature of the content, how long the content remained visible on the social media site, the potential for recirculation by others and the impact on the school or the individuals concerned. Staff should be aware that actions online can be in breach of the disciplinary policy. If the outcome of an investigation leads to disciplinary action, the consequences will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate procedures. Serious breaches could result in the dismissal of the employee. Where conduct is considered to be unlawful, the school will report the matter to the police and other external agencies.

8. 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).

From time to time the school will monitor or record communications that are sent or received from within the school's network.



Hillcross Primary School

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis and, in accordance with the following, on an as-and-when-required basis:

- Legislative changes.
- Good practice guidance.
- Case law.
- Significant incidents reported.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

9. Legislation

Acceptable use of social networking must comply with UK law. In applying this policy, the school will adhere to its rights, responsibilities, and duties in accordance with the following:

- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Defamation Act 2013

The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media – the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. When using social media, staff should be aware of the potential impact on themselves and the employer, whether for work-related or personal use; whether during working hours or otherwise; or whether social media is accessed using the employer's equipment or using the employee's equipment. Staff should use discretion and common sense when engaging in online communication.

Appendix A contains some general rules and best practice guidelines which staff may find helpful.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. We are committed to treating all members of the school community fairly and challenging negative attitudes about disability and accessibility and to developing a culture of awareness, tolerance and inclusion. This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any member of the school community and it helps to promote equality and accessibility at our school. The curriculum is planned to be inclusive and meet the needs and interests of a full range of learners. Activities and resources will be differentiated and adult support used to ensure that children access the curriculum and make the best possible progress.

Safeguarding Commitment

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, in line with the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and expects all staff and volunteers to share



Hillcross Primary School

this commitment. We take seriously our duty of care to our pupils and staff which includes safeguarding them from the risk of being drawn into terrorism - this includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. We work closely with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Radicalisation is recognised as a specific safeguarding issue and is addressed in line with the Government Prevent Strategy and The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Privacy Policy

Hillcross School is committed to ensuring protection of all personal information that we hold. We recognise our obligations under the GDPR and Data Protection act 2018. Our practice is documented in our Data Protection Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body will monitor the outcomes and impact of this policy on an annual basis including trends in progression across specific groups of teachers to assess its effect and the school's continued compliance with equalities legislation.

Approved: November 2025

Reviewed:

Date of next review: November 2026



Hillcross Primary School

Appendix A

Responsible use of social media – Guidance for Staff

Remember that anything you post online is not really private. Below are some common-sense guidelines and recommendations that staff are advised to follow to ensure responsible and safe use of social media.

- Staff must not access social networking sites for personal use via school IT systems or using school equipment.
- Do not add pupils as friends or contacts in your social media accounts.
- Follow the social media policy.
- Always maintain professional boundaries. Do not engage in discussions with pupils online unless through official school accounts. If a member of staff receives messages on his/her social networking profile which they think could be from a pupil they must report this to the Headteacher, who will decide the appropriate action to take.
- Think about the potential risks; professional boundaries of adding parents to your personal social media accounts (refer to policy)
- Consider using an alternative name on sites like Facebook to make it harder for pupils to find you. For example, some staff use their first name and middle name rather than their surname, or their surname backwards
- Never post anything that is offensive or aggressive, even if you are very angry or upset. It can easily be taken out of context.
- Remember that humour is relative, e.g. posting about a recent stag/hen event may be deemed as inappropriate. Likewise, a few 'light-hearted' images about colleagues or students may not be perceived as such by either the subject(s) of the humour or the school. The guiding rule is: if in doubt, don't post it.
- Staff need to ensure that when they are communicating about others, even outside of work, that they give due regard to the potential for defamation of character. Making allegations on social networking sites (even in their own time and in their own homes) about other staff, pupils or other individuals connected with the school, or another school, could result in formal action being taken. This includes the uploading of photographs which might bring the school into disrepute.
- Make sure you regularly check or refresh your site page to ensure it is free of any inappropriate comments and / or images.
- If you are tagged in something on social media that you feel is inappropriate, use the remove tag feature to untag yourself



Hillcross Primary School

- Be cautious when accepting 'friend requests' from people you do not really know. Simply being a friend of a friend does not mean that they should have access to your details and posts on social media.
- Review your profile information and settings regularly to ensure that it is appropriate as it may be accessed by colleagues, pupils, parents or prospective employers.
- Check your privacy and security settings regularly, and keep your date of birth, address, and telephone number to yourself. Identity theft is a growing crime, and this kind of information could be used to gain access to your bank or credit card account
- If you feel dissatisfied and wish to rant about teaching, politics, and life in general, consider doing so anonymously, through a networking account or blog which cannot be attributed to you. Check that anything you do post in this cannot identify you, the school or any of its pupils or parents.
- Ensure that any comments and/or images could not be deemed as defamatory or in breach of copyright legislation.
- Never post any information which can be used to identify a pupil.
- Do not use social media in any way to attack or abuse colleagues or air any other internal grievances.
- Do not post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content.
- Do not engage in any conduct (using personal insults / obscenities) which would not be acceptable in the workplace.
- Do not use social media to undertake 'whistleblowing' – raise concerns through the proper channels which would entitle you to legal protection (Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998).