Social media policy

Rickmansworth Park JMI School

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	**Date:** 11th February 2026
Last reviewed on:	February 2025	
Next review due by:	February 2027	

Introduction

At Rickmansworth Park JMI School, the children are at the heart of all that we do. We have a strong tradition of promoting excellence and supporting ambition within a caring, happy and safe environment.

Our guiding principles are:

- To provide an education which develops the whole child.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum with a strong focus on enrichment opportunities.
- To teach children to understand their own rights and to respect the rights of others.

Rickmansworth Park School is a Rights Respecting School, based upon the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child. A rights-respecting school not only teaches about children's rights but also models rights and respect in all its relationships. We believe that being a rights- respecting school promotes positive behaviour and will enable us to develop successful, responsible citizens for the future.

All members of the school community have a role in promoting positive behaviour. A sense of responsibility is encouraged amongst our pupils to aid their development as good citizens.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

A number of Articles in the UNCRC are pertinent to this policy:

Article 3 - When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children.

Article 16 - Every child has the right to privacy. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation (or good name) from any attack.

Article 17 - Children have the right to get information from the Internet, radio, television, newspapers, books and other sources. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful.

Article 19 - Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

Article 31 - Every child has the right to rest, relax, play and to take part in cultural and creative activities.

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This policy aims to:

1. Purpose and Scope

- 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 on 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.

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.

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

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 device.

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 message, 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 us (either visually, verbally or written), we ask that you make it clear that any content and views are your own. Confirming this point does not make you exempt from following this policy.

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

2. Use of Official School Media

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

- Facebook: Rickmansworth Park
- Instagram: RickyParkJMI

These accounts are managed by SLT and School Business Manager. Staff members who have not been authorised by Jane Linch (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 channels, please speak to Rebecca Davey (School Business Manager) or Natalie Catalano (Deputy Head). Staff wishing to share content must do so via the Deputy Head or SBM.

2.1 Facebook

The school may choose to post on Facebook:

- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Links to school website
- Achievements of pupils and staff, without identifiable photos of individuals
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings

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

- Names and photos of individuals
- 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

2.2 Instagram

The school may choose to post on Instagram:

- Advertisements for school events or activities
- Links to school website
- Achievements of pupils and staff, without identifiable photos of individuals
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities
- Seasonal greetings

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

- Names and photos of individuals
- 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

2.3 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

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.

2.4 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

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. If staff choose to follow the school social media accounts, it is expected that they set their own accounts to maximum privacy.

Occasional personal use of social media during working hours is permitted in our designated place so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content, does not interfere with employment responsibilities or productivity, and complies with this policy.

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, 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
- You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage our interests or reputation, even indirectly
- You should not use social media in a way that breaches any of our policies, the law, or any other regulatory requirements.

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 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 via official school channels).

Business use of social media

If you are contacted for comments about us for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, the enquiry should be directed to the line manager / Headteacher, and you should not respond without written approval.

4. Personal use of social media by pupils

The school expects 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
- 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 the school's social media posts 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 WhatsApp groups

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

6. Training and awareness

Existing staff and newly inducted staff are all trained in safeguarding and child protection, have read the staff Code of Conduct and the school's Rights Resecting Behaviour Policy.

7. 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.

8. Related policies

This policy will be reviewed annually. The governing board is responsible for reviewing and approving this policy.

- Child protection policy
- Online safety policy
- Rights Respecting behaviour policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Prevent policy

Breach of this policy

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

You may be required to remove any social media content that we 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 you to disclose matters from your personal life we will consider the circumstances and context of each matter before determining whether any further action is required.