



Social Media use by school staff and volunteers

BEDWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Bedwell Crescent,
Stevenage, Herts, SG1 1NJ**

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1. Introduction

The aims of this policy are to:

- set guidelines and rules for the school's official use of social media
- enable appropriate use of social networking sites in a safe and secure manner
- safeguard employees in their use of social media 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.

2. Definition of social media

For the purposes of this policy, social media is any online platform or app that allows users to publish information, share content and interact with others either to a wide audience or through private conversations, such as private messages. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Instagram
- YouTube
- TikTok
- Twitter / X
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- message boards

It also includes any website where you can contribute or edit content and instant messaging services i.e., WhatsApp, Snapchat etc.

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-posting/circulating posts or adding/editing content on a website.

3. Use of official school social media

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

- The *bedwell_school* Instagram account - www.instagram.com/bedwell_school

This account is managed by a member of SLT. This responsibility is currently delegated to the Deputy Headteacher. Other staff members are encouraged to forward ideas for content and posts to the Deputy Headteacher, but cannot post them themselves.

The aim of the account is to share information about successes, activities and events that the school is involved in (including lots of photos). The intended audience comprises families of children currently at the school, and families who are looking for a school place. It is not intended to be a primary form of communication or messaging with parents - this is done through Arbor, email and paper copies of letters.

The school will post on Instagram:

- Photos or posts relating to school trips, events and activities
- Achievements of children and staff
- Advertisements for school events and activities
- Links to sections of the school website, newsletters and other factsheets

The school will not post:

- Names and photographs of individuals - children and staff will never be named, and in general photos will focus on groups of children, rather than individuals
- Harmful or abusive comments
- Political statements
- Advertisements for businesses, apart from information on events that are taking place at school (eg. external after school clubs)
- Links to personal accounts (of staff members or anyone else)

The account is set-up so that no commenting or replies are possible, and we do not follow any other accounts.

Pictures of children will only be posted where we have consent from their parents / carers, either electronically (through Arbor) or in writing (see Appendix A). In the event that a parent, carer or child asks us to remove a picture of them, we will do so as soon as is reasonably possible.

4. Personal use of social media

If it can be determined from your account that you work for Bedwell 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.

While at work, 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 take place in the staff room or other 'staff only' areas, and should never be in the presence of pupils. 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 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

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
- creating 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 position include, but are 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 with the Headteacher 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 a member of SLT.

If the employee becomes aware of social media content that disparages or reflects poorly on the school, the employee should contact a member of SLT.

8. Monitoring

The school reserves the right to monitor and review employees use of social media. The school considers that valid reasons for checking on 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 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.

Appendix A : Photo consent letter

22.09.25

Dear parents and carers,

We are keen to share information on school activities, trips, events and successes with you, and would like to extend this to the use of Instagram. To make sure that we do this safely, we have set-up our account so that no one can comment on our posts, and will never post the name of individual children (or any other member of our school community). You can see what this looks like at www.instagram.com/bedwell_school, where you will find content from our last two PGL trips.

We need your consent before we can post pictures including your child, and therefore are asking you to either complete and return the slip below or TICK SOMETHING? on Arbor. You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing the school office via admin@bedwell.herts.sch.uk, at which point we will remove all pictures of your child as soon as possible.

If you have any questions about the school's use of Instagram, please contact the school office.

Many thanks for your continued support,

Mr D. Roberts

Deputy Headteacher

Name of child: Class:

I give consent for images of my child to be posted on Bedwell School's Instagram account. This consent will last until my child leaves Bedwell, unless I contact the school to rescind it.

Signed: Date: