





DINGLE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Date adopted:	25th November 2025
Next review due:	Autumn 2026
Reviewed by:	Full Governing Board
Signed:	 (Headteacher)
Signed:	 (Chair of Governing Board)
Date:	25.11.2025

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, 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.

2. Use of official school social media

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

- Facebook – Dingle Community Primary School

These accounts are managed by the Community Lead and School Business Manager. 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 the Community Lead or School Business Manager.

2.1 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 pupils 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

2.2 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.

2.3 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.

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

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 also do not have contact via personal accounts with past pupils (if ongoing communication is required, this should be using via 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
- 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 WhatsApp groups

We expect parents/carers to follow the WhatsApp guidelines (appendix 1) when using class WhatsApp groups.

6. Training and awareness

The school is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community understand their responsibilities when engaging with social media. As part of staff induction, all new employees receive guidance on the school's Social Media Policy, including expectations for professional conduct online and the appropriate use of official school accounts. Staff who have permission to post on the school's official social media platforms receive additional role-specific training to ensure that all content published is appropriate, accurate, and compliant with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

This guidance is revisited regularly through ongoing professional development sessions and annual safeguarding and digital safety training. Updates or changes to best practice are also communicated to staff as needed throughout the year.

Pupils are taught about safe and responsible online behaviour through the school's computing and PSHE curriculum, with age-appropriate activities designed to develop digital literacy and awareness of online risks.

Parents and carers are supported through periodic communications, workshops, and information sessions to help them understand current social media guidance, online safety expectations, and how to support their children's responsible use of digital platforms at home.

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.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The governing board is responsible for this policy.

8. Related policies

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- E-Safety policy
- Behaviour policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Mobile and Smart Technology policy
- WhatsApp Guidelines for Parents

Appendix 1 – Whatsapp Guidelines

Parent/Carer WhatsApp Groups

Parent/Carer WhatsApp groups, which operate independently of the school, can be a very useful way to connect parents in a particular class or year group. Class WhatsApp groups may have been voluntarily set up by the parents in each class and endeavour to include all parents with children in the class.

There is no requirement to join these groups and participation is voluntary.

Ideally, these group chats are used as an efficient means of receiving relevant updates and reminders about school events that have been published in the newsletter, the sharing of information that is of general interest to all parents in the class or a forum to offer any supportive parenting advice. The messages in the class or year WhatsApp groups come from parents/carers in their personal capacity.

The school does not post directly on any WhatsApp parent/carers groups, nor do we have 'parent advocates' who post messages on our behalf.

Code of Conduct

Most of the time, group chats will be a beneficial resource and an enjoyable place to be in. However, these same spaces also have the power to inflame; they are a potential source of misinformation and can fuel bad feeling. At worst, online parent communication groups have the potential to create unnecessary concerns. In order to prevent any offense or upset, we ask that everyone using these groups within our school community read and follow the notes and guidelines listed below:

- The group should never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a member of staff, child or parent in the class or school.
- Messages posted on the WhatsApp Year Groups should be supportive and respectful of all other group users.
- The group should be used keeping in mind mutual respect and cultural sensitivity between all its members;
- Private email messages between a parent and the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, or individual staff member should not be screenshot and posted on WhatsApp/social media – this breaks both confidentiality and trust.

We anticipate parents, carers and other visitors will:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school.
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils.

- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example with communication and behaviour;
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues;
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.

Please note, the school considers the following WhatsApp activity inappropriate:

- Abusive, personal comments or open criticism about staff, pupils or other parents or any member of the school community.
- Displays of anger including swearing or using offensive language.
- Bringing the school into disrepute.
- Posting aggressive, defamatory or libellous comments.
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children.

To avoid uncomfortable or unpleasant situations for other group users, parents/carers are therefore politely asked to consider the nature of their WhatsApp post carefully as any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members and may not be representative of the whole group.

Raising Concerns

For individual concerns regarding pupil performance, school policies, staff conduct etc. please raise any issues directly with the class teacher or, where necessary, the Headteacher, rather than using WhatsApp as a platform to air views.

If you are concerned about inappropriate comments on a class/year WhatsApp group, in confidence, please contact our Senior Leadership Team by emailing the school on info@dingle.dudley.sch.uk.

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the code of conduct detailed above, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident. Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then consider:

- Sending a cautionary notice to the parent.
- Inviting the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher.
- Contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour);
- Seek advice from our legal team/the local authority's legal team regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- Request that the parent does not enter the school site.

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way.