



Linden Lodge School

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| Title: | Social Media Policy |
| Type: | POLICY |

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| Review Cycle Frequency: | 1 year |
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| Lead Staff: | E-Safety Lead |
| Support: | Director of IT |

VERSION CONTROL:

| Version No | New document or reasons for revision | Agreed by | Date |
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| 1 | Migration to new document version control system | Office | April 2021 |
| 2 | Policy update | Lead Staff | Sept 2022 |
| 3 | Policy review | Lead Staff | Autumn 2023 |
| 4 | Policy review | Lead staff | Spring 2025 |

LINKED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

Safeguarding & Child Protection policy

Staff Use of Social Media for Personal Use

Data protection policy

LINKED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

Equalities Statement:

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of these policies on equality and the possible implications for people with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Requests for Paper Copies:

If you require this policy in a different format e.g. print or braille please contact

Co-Headteachers@lindenlodge.org.uk

Wellbeing statement of commitment

We are committed to providing a healthy working environment and improving the quality of working lives for all staff and students. The wellbeing strategy aims to support our mission, core values and freedom of thought and expression, freedom from discrimination and the recognition that our community is our greatest asset. For further information on our school's commitment to wellbeing, please see the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy document, or visit our school website.

Linden Lodge School's Social Media presence

Linden Lodge School works on the principle that if we don't manage our social media reputation, someone else will.

Online Reputation Management (ORM) is about understanding and managing our digital footprint (everything that can be seen or read about the school online). Few parents will apply for a school place without first 'googling' the school, and the Ofsted pre-inspection check includes monitoring what is being said online.

Negative coverage almost always causes some level of disruption. Up to half of all cases dealt with by the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk) involve schools' (and staff members') online reputation.

Accordingly, we manage and monitor our social media footprint carefully to know what is being said about the school and to respond to criticism and praise in a fair, responsible manner.

Our IT Manager is responsible for managing our Twitter/Instagram/YouTube and other social media accounts and checking our Wikipedia. They follow the guidance in the LGfL / Safer Internet Centre online-reputation management document.

Staff, pupils' and parents' Social Media presence

Social media (including all apps, sites and games that allow sharing and interaction between users) is a fact of modern life. We accept that many of our parents, our staff and our pupils will use it. In relation to our school, we expect everybody to behave in a positive manner, engaging respectfully with us and each other on social media, in the same way as they would face to face.

This positive behaviour can be summarised as not making any posts which are or could be construed as bullying, aggressive, rude, insulting, illegal or otherwise inappropriate, or which might bring the school or (particularly for staff) into disrepute. This applies both to public pages and to private posts, e.g. parent chats, pages or groups.

If parents have a concern about the school, we would urge them to contact us directly and in private to resolve the matter. If an issue cannot be resolved in this way, the school complaints procedure published on our website should be followed. Sharing complaints on social media is unlikely to help resolve the matter, but can cause upset to staff, pupils and parents, also undermining staff morale and the reputation of the school (which is important for the pupils we serve). For further information regarding our complaints procedures please visit our policies page on our website here: <https://www.lindenlodge.wandsworth.sch.uk/policies>

Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 (note that WhatsApp is 16). We ask parents to respect age ratings on social media platforms wherever possible and not encourage or condone underage use. It is worth noting that Online Harms regulation is likely to require more stringent age verification measures over the coming years.

However, the school has to strike a difficult balance of not encouraging underage use at the same time as needing to acknowledge reality in order to best help our pupils/students to avoid

or cope with issues if they arise. Our online safety lessons look at social media and other online behaviours including how to be a good friend online, how to report bullying, misuse, intimidation and abuse. We are fully aware that children will often learn most from the models of behaviour they see and experience, which will often be from adults and therefore we ensure our parents and carers have access to a wide range of resources which are delivered to them through the National Online Safety organisation.

We offer support to our parents and carers by providing guidance as to how to use the internet safely and keeping them up to date with latest online dangers to look out for as well as how they can best support their children in using the internet safely. For the majority of the time, parents are most effective within this when they talk to their children about the apps, sites and games they use, with whom, for how long, and when.

The school has an official Twitter / Instagram account and asks parents/carers not to use these channels to communicate about their children.

Email, Text and Class List are electronic communication channels between parents and the school and email and Google Classroom between staff and pupils.

Pupils/students are not allowed* to be 'friends' with or make a friend request** to any staff, governors, volunteers and contractors or otherwise communicate via social media.

Pupils/students are discouraged from 'following' staff, governor, volunteer or contractor public accounts (e.g. following a staff member with a public Instagram account). However, we accept that this can be hard to control (but this highlights the need for staff to remain professional in their private lives). In the reverse situation, however, staff must not follow such public student accounts.

* Exceptions may be made, e.g. for pre-existing family links, but these must be approved by the Headteacher, and should be declared upon entry of the pupil or staff member to the school.

** Any attempt to do so may be a safeguarding concern or disciplinary matter and should be notified to the DSL.

Staff are reminded that they are obliged not to bring the school or profession into disrepute and the easiest way to avoid this is to have the strictest privacy settings and avoid inappropriate sharing and oversharing online. They should never discuss the school or its stakeholders on social media and be careful that their personal opinions might not be attributed to the school, trust or local authority, bringing the school into disrepute.

The serious consequences of inappropriate behaviour on social media are underlined by the fact that during the last 5 years, there have been 263 Prohibition Orders issued by the Teacher Regulation Agency to teaching staff that involved misuse of social media/technology.

All members of the school community are reminded that particularly in the context of social media, it is important to comply with the school policy on Digital Images and Video and permission is sought before uploading photographs, videos or any other information about other people.

Staff should never take photographs with personal devices on site, personal devices e.g. phones should not be used within public spaces where pupils are and should only ever be used the designated spaces i.e. staff rooms.

Social media incidents

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or the staff handbook and staff code of conduct (for staff).

Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the school community, Linden Lodge School will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.

Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the school may report it to the platform where it is hosted, and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline, POSH (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for support or help to accelerate this process. The police or other authorities may be involved where a post is potentially illegal or dangerous.

Extremism

The school has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty. Staff will not support or promote extremist organisations, messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the school, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature. We ask for parents' support in this also, especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be widespread on certain platforms.

Further questions

If parents have further questions, they can contact David Shaw (E-Safety Lead) at the school; the NSPCC has a parent online safety helpline which can help with general issues that are not school specific.

Staff should speak to a member of the safeguarding team in the first instance, who may then call on the expertise of the Multi Academy Trust, LGfL DigiSafe or Professionals' Online-Safety Helpline.