# Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School

Learning for the Head, Heart and Hand

# Social Media Policy

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| Date Reviewed: | October 2025 |
| Date of next review: | October 2026 |
| Reviewer: | Rachael Foster (Headteacher) |
| Co-chairs of Governors: | Ellie Brown and James Coumbe |

(This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures)

# 1. Policy aims and scope

- This policy has been written by Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School, involving staff, pupils and parents/carers, building on Kent County Councils LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service Social Media policy template, with specialist advice and input as required.
- It takes into account the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE, Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'(WTSC) and non-statutory DfE 'Behaviour in Schools Advice for headteachers and school staff' and 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school', and the local Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-agency Partnership (KSCMP) procedures.
- The purpose of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all members of Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School community when using social media.
    - Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School recognises that online safety is an essential part of safeguarding and acknowledges its duty to ensure that all pupils and staff are protected from potential harm when using social media.
    - As outlined in our child protection policy, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Rachael Foster, Headteacher is recognised as having overall responsibility for online safety.
- The policy applies to all use of social media; the term social media includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chatrooms and instant messenger apps or other online communication services.
- This policy applies to pupils, parents/carers and all staff, including the governing body, leadership team, teachers, support staff, external contractors, visitors, volunteers and other individuals who work for, or provide services on behalf of the setting (collectively referred to as "staff" in this policy).

## • Links with other policies

This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans, including but not limited to:

- Anti-bullying
- Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
- Behaviour policy
- Child protection
- Staff code of conduct
- Confidentiality
- Curriculum policies, such as: Computing, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Privacy Notice/Data Protection
- Mobile and smart technology
- Online Safety
- Searching, screening and confiscation

# 2. General social media expectations

- Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School believes everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity. Even though online spaces may differ in many ways, the same standards of behaviour are expected online

as offline, and all members of our community are expected to engage in social media in a positive and responsible manner.

- All members of our community are advised not to post or share content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others on any social media service.
- We will restrict learner and staff access to social media via our filtering and monitoring systems which are applied to all school provided devices and systems; further information on how this is achieved in addressed in our child protection policy and Acceptable Use Policies. Our school uses Netsweeper as the filtering service.
- The use of social media is not permitted on site, using school devices and network.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School community on social media will be taken seriously. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the appropriate policies, including anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour, code of conduct, Acceptable Use Policies, and child protection.

# 3. Staff use of social media

- The use of social media during school hours for personal use is not permitted for staff using any school device or network.
- Safe and professional online behaviour is outlined for all members of staff, including volunteers, as part of our code of conduct and acceptable use of technology policy.
- The safe and responsible use of social media sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction. Advice will be provided and updated via staff training and additional guidance and resources will be shared with staff as required on a regular basis.
- Any complaint about staff misuse of social media or policy breaches will be taken seriously in line with our child protection and behaviour/allegations against staff policy.

## 4.1 Reputation

- All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the school. Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media. This may include, but is not limited to:
    - Setting appropriate privacy levels on their personal accounts/sites.
    - Being aware of the implications of using location sharing services.
    - Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
    - Logging out of accounts after use.
    - Using strong passwords.
    - Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as being that of the school.
- Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information being linked with the setting and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.

- All staff are expected to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional reputation and legal framework. All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post on social media.
- Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about pupils and their family members or colleagues, will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- Members of staff will notify the leadership team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

### 4.2 Communicating with pupils and their families

- Staff will not use any personal social media accounts to contact pupils or their family members.
- All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or add any current or past pupils or their family members, as 'friends' on any personal social media accounts.
- Any communication from pupils and parents/carers received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the DSL (or deputy).
- Any pre-existing relationships or situations, which mean staff cannot comply with this requirement, will be discussed with the DSL and the headteacher. Decisions made and advice provided in these situations will be formally recorded to safeguard pupils, members of staff and the setting.
- If ongoing contact with pupils is required once they have left the setting, members of staff will be expected to use existing alumni networks, or use official setting provided communication tools.

## 4. Official use of social media

- Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School official social media channels are Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School Instagram Link
- The official use of social media sites by Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School only takes place with clear educational or community engagement objectives and with specific intended outcomes and once the use has been formally risk assessed and approved by the headteacher prior to use.
- Official social media sites are suitably protected and, where possible, run and/or linked to/from our website.
    - Official social media channels have been set up as distinct and dedicated accounts for official educational or engagement purposes only.
    - Staff use setting provided email addresses to register for and manage official social media channels.
    - Leadership staff have access to account information and login details for our social media channels, in case of emergency, such as staff absence.
- Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including but not limited to anti-bullying, image/camera use, data protection, confidentiality and child protection.
- All communication on official social media platforms by staff on behalf of the setting will be clear, transparent and open to scrutiny. Public communications on behalf of the setting will, where appropriate and possible, be read and agreed by at least one other colleague.

- Parents/carers and pupils will be informed of any official social media use, along with expectations for safe use and action taken to safeguard the community.
- Parents and carers will be informed of any official social media use with pupils; any official social media activity involving pupils will be moderated if possible and written parental consent will be obtained as required.
- We will ensure that any official social media use does not exclude members of the community who are unable or unwilling to use social media channels.
- Members of staff who follow and/or like our official social media channels will be advised to use dedicated professionals accounts where possible, to avoid blurring professional boundaries.
- If members of staff are managing and/or participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:
    - Read and understand our Acceptable Use Policy.
    - Where they are running official accounts, sign our social media Acceptable Use Policy.
    - Be aware they are an ambassador for the school.
    - Be professional, responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
    - Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
    - Follow our image use policy at all times; for example, ensuring that appropriate consent has been given before sharing images.
    - Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so.
    - Not engage with any private or direct messaging with current or past pupils or their family members.
    - Inform their line manager, the DSL (or deputy) of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from pupils.

## 5. Pupils use of social media

- The use of social media during school hours for personal use s not permitted for pupils.
- Many online behaviour incidents amongst children and young people occur on social media outside the school day and off the school premises. Parents/carers are responsible for this behaviour; however, some online incidents may affect our culture and/or pose a risk to children and young people's health and well-being. Where online behaviour online poses a threat or causes harm to another pupil, could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school when the pupil is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school, action will be taken in line with our behaviour and child protection/online safety policies.
- Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School will empower our pupils to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful way, and develop their resilience so they can manage and respond to online risks. Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to pupils as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding education approach using age-appropriate sites and resources. Further information is contained within our child protection and relevant specific curriculum policies for example, RSE and Computing.

- We are aware that many popular social media sites are not permitted for use by children under the age of 13, or in some cases higher. As such, we will not create accounts for pupils under the required age as outlined in the services terms and conditions.
- Pupils will be advised:
    - to consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details or information on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.
    - to only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others, for example by making profiles private.
    - not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other appropriate adults' permission, and to only do so when a trusted adult is present.
    - to use safe passwords.
    - to use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
    - how to block and report unwanted communications.
    - how to report concerns on social media, both within the setting and externally.
- Any concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate existing policies, including anti-bullying, child protection and behaviour.
- The DSL (or deputy) will respond to social media concerns involving safeguarding or child protection risks in line with our child protection policy.
- Sanctions and/or pastoral/welfare support will be implemented and offered to pupils as appropriate, in line with our child protection and behaviour policy. Civil or legal action may be taken if necessary.
- Concerns regarding pupils' use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media services and games.

## 6. Policy monitoring and review

- Technology evolves and changes rapidly. Lady Joanna Thornhill (Endowed) Primary School will review this policy at least annually. The policy will be revised following any national or local policy updates, any local concerns and/or any changes to our technical infrastructure.
- We will regularly monitor internet use taking place via our provided devices and systems and evaluate online safety mechanisms to ensure that this policy is consistently applied. Any issues identified will be incorporated into our action planning.
- All members of the community will be made aware of how the school will monitor policy compliance: via the Acceptable Use Policies, staff training and classroom management.

## 7. Responding to policy breaches

- All members of the community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing school policies and procedures. This includes the child protection, online safety and behaviour policies.
- After any investigations are completed, leadership staff will debrief, identify lessons learnt and implement any policy or curriculum changes, as required.
- We require staff, parents/carers and pupils to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.

- All members of the community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.
- Pupils, parents and staff will be informed of our complaints procedure and staff will be made aware of the whistleblowing procedure.
- If we are unsure how to proceed with an incident or concern, the DSL (Headteacher) or a deputy (Deputy Headteacher, Pastoral Support Mentor and Assistant Headteacher) will seek advice from Kent County Council or other agencies, as appropriate, in accordance with our child protection policy.