



Argyle
Primary
School

Social Media Policy

2023-24

Review Date: Spring 2023

Agreed by: FGB 01.02.2024

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Social media

Argyle Primary's Social Media presence

Argyle Primary School works on the principle that if we do not 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. Currently, our school has an official Twitter account.

The Headteacher is responsible for managing our Twitter account, checking our Google reviews and dealing with negative comments where appropriate.

Staff, pupils' and parents' SM presence

Social media (including here all apps, sites and games that allow sharing and interaction between users) is a fact of modern life, and as a school, we accept that many parents, staff and pupils will use it. However, as stated in the acceptable use policies which all members of the school community sign, we expect everybody to behave in a positive manner, engaging respectfully with the school 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 teaching profession 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 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).

Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 (note that WhatsApp is 16+). We advise parents to respect age ratings on social media platforms wherever possible and not encourage or condone underage use. If the school becomes aware of online issues arising between pupils that cause concern, the school will deal with them appropriately as stated in our Online Safety Policy.

However, the school has to strike a difficult balance of not encouraging underage use at the same time as needing to acknowledge reality, and to help our pupils avoid or cope with issues if they arise. Online safety lessons will look at social media and other online behaviour, how to be a good friend online and

how to report bullying, misuse, intimidation or abuse. However, children will often learn most from the models of behaviour they see and experience, which will often be from adults.

Parents can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use. Parents should ask their child to explain the games to them, who they play with and monitor for how long. They should not encourage them to play games in their bedroom late at night, as they are not helpful for a good night's sleep and productive teaching and learning at school the next day.

The school has an official Twitter account managed by the Headteacher and will respond to general enquiries about the school, but asks parents/carers not to use these channels to communicate about their children.

Email is the official electronic communication channel between parents and the school. Messages can be sent via admin@argyle.camden.sch.uk and will be directed to the correct person who will be able to respond to queries.

Pupils are not allowed* to be 'friends' with or make a friend request on social media to any staff, governors, volunteers and contractors or otherwise communicate via social media. Any attempt to do so may be a safeguarding concern or disciplinary matter and should be notified to the DSL (if by a child) or to the Headteacher (if by a staff member).

Pupils are discouraged from 'following' staff, governor, volunteer 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.

Staff need to be mindful 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 be attributed to the school, trust or local authority, bringing the school into disrepute.

The serious consequences of inappropriate behaviour on social media are emphasised by the fact that of the 131 Prohibition Orders issued to staff in 2017, 73 involved social media/technology (and 27 of the 66 orders by August 2018).

All members of the school community must remember 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. Information can be found in our Online Safety Policy.

Social media incidents

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with, in line with the school Online Safety Policy (for pupils) or Code of Conduct handbook (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, Argyle Primary 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 (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 as indicated in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. 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 by the school. 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 The Headteacher or Deputy DSL's at the school; the NSPCC has a parent online safety helpline that can help with general issues that are not school specific.

Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Agreed by	Next Review Date
February 2022	Headteacher	FGB February 2024	Spring 2025