



Bexton Primary School
'Together we can make a difference'

Social Media Policy

Name of school: Bexton Primary School
Date of review: Autumn 2026
New review date: Autumn 2027

Introduction

Social media — including apps and sites such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, WhatsApp and X, as well as messaging platforms, live streaming, gaming platforms with chat or social functions, and AI-powered chatbots and companion apps — is now a normal part of daily life for both children and adults.

This policy sets out Bexton Primary School's expectations for the use of social media by pupils, out of school, and by parents, carers and other adults associated with the school. It explains how the school supports children to use social media safely and responsibly, and sets out our expectations of parents and carers, including how any concerns about the school should be raised.

When we refer to "parent" in this policy, we also include carers, relatives and anyone else associated with the school.

This policy should be read alongside:

- the Online Safety Policy, which sets out in detail how online safety — including the four areas of online risk (content, contact, conduct and commerce), generative AI, filtering and monitoring, and mobile phone use — is taught, managed and safeguarded within school;
- the Behaviour for Learning Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy, which set out how the school responds to cyberbullying and other online conduct issues involving pupils; and
- the school's Complaints Policy, which sets out the formal route for raising a concern about the school.

Social Media Definition

Social media technologies take many different forms, including social networking apps and sites, messaging apps, video and photo sharing platforms, live streaming, vlogging, podcasts, online forums, gaming platforms with social or chat functions, and AI-powered chatbots and companion apps.

The School's Use of Social Media

In addition to the school website and learning platform, Bexton Primary School maintains official social media accounts, which are used to share school information and celebrate children's achievements (the platforms used are not exhaustive and may change over time). These accounts are managed in line with the school's Online Safety Policy, including how they are administered and monitored.

Parents are asked to inform the school in writing if they do not want their child's photograph to appear on the school's social media accounts, website or other publications. The school will never publish a child's full name alongside their image.

Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- support pupils to use social media safely, responsibly and in an age-appropriate way, both in and out of school;
- encourage social media to be used in a positive and beneficial way by parents and the wider school community;
- safeguard pupils, staff, governors and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social media, including cyberbullying, online abuse and reputational harm;
- safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted public criticism or abuse on social media;
- clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social media by parents;
- set out the procedures the school will follow where social media is used inappropriately or unlawfully to the detriment of the school, its staff, pupils, governors or anyone else associated with the school; and
- set out the action the school may take in response to inappropriate use.

Pupils' Use of Social Media

Bexton Primary School operates a mobile phone-free environment by default, and pupils do not have routine access to social media, personal devices or the internet during the school day; full detail is set out in the Online Safety Policy and its mobile phones arrangements.

We recognise, however, that many pupils use social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms and AI chatbots outside school, often with a parent's knowledge, and that this can bring both benefits and risks. This section sets out how the school supports pupils to stay safe out of school, and what will happen if a concern arises.

Age limits

Most social media platforms (including Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook and X) require users to be at least 13 years old, under the platforms' own terms of service; this means that no child at Bexton Primary School currently meets the minimum age to hold an account on these platforms. Parents are asked to be mindful of this when deciding whether to allow their child to use social media and are encouraged to make use of parental controls, privacy settings and age-appropriate alternatives, as recommended through the school's online safety communications.

The government has announced plans to introduce a legal duty on social media companies not to offer their services to under-16s, alongside restrictions on features such as livestreaming and contact from strangers. At the time of writing this is not yet law: it is expected to be introduced through regulations, with protections anticipated from spring 2027. The school will update this policy and its communications with parents as this develops.

Online safety education

Pupils are taught about the risks and responsibilities of using social media and the wider internet through the school's computing curriculum (Kapow) and PSHE curriculum (Jigsaw), including the four areas of online risk (content, contact, conduct and commerce), safe and respectful online communication and the risks associated with AI-generated content, including 'deepfakes'. Further details of this is set out in the Online Safety Policy.

Pupils are taught that creating or sharing a nude or semi-nude image or video of themselves or another child — including an AI-generated or 'deepfake' image — is illegal and will always be treated as a safeguarding matter, whether it happens in school or out of school, and whether or not it was shared willingly.

Reporting a concern

If a pupil, parent or member of staff becomes aware of a concern involving a pupil's use of social media out of school — for example, cyberbullying, contact from a stranger, upsetting content, or the sharing of inappropriate images — this should be reported to the school in the same way as any other safeguarding or behaviour concern, so that the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be informed and appropriate support put in place, in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour for Learning Policy. Pupils are encouraged to remember the 'Stop, Block, Report' message and to tell a trusted adult whenever something online worries them.

Parents' and Carers' Use of Social Media

The school recognises that many parents and other family members have personal social media accounts, which they may use to discuss or share views with friends, family and acquaintances, including views about school issues. The school does not monitor individuals' personal social media accounts. However, if information is passed to the school that raises concern about the content of such accounts — for example, where it negatively affects the objectives of this policy — the school may investigate the matter further with the relevant parties.

Appropriate use

As a guide, before posting about the school, its staff, governors, pupils or anyone else associated with the school on social media, individuals should consider:

- Is social media the appropriate channel to raise this concern, give this feedback or express this view?
- Would a private and confidential discussion with the school be more appropriate — for example, if a serious allegation or concern is involved? Social media should not be used to name individuals or make comments about them.
- Are the comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to an individual, particularly before the school has had a chance to look into a concern?
- What reputational impact could the post have on the school and what impact could it have on pupils' learning and wellbeing?

The school reserves the right to contact individuals directly to raise concerns about social media posts that may affect the reputation of the school.

Raising a concern with the school

Bexton Primary School does not condone the public criticism of the school, its staff, governors, pupils or anyone associated with the school on social media. Social media is not an appropriate channel for raising a concern or complaint, however genuinely held, and posts of this kind can cause significant and disproportionate harm to individuals as well as to the wider school community.

Any concern, complaint or piece of feedback should always be raised directly with the school in the first instance, using the following channels, so that it can be looked into promptly, fairly and confidentially:

- Telephone: 01565 632816
- Email: admin@bexton.cheshire.sch.uk

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally through these channels, parents should follow the school's Complaints Policy.

Inappropriate use

The school considers the following to be inappropriate uses of social media (this list is not exhaustive and is intended to provide examples only):

- making allegations about staff or pupils at the school, or engaging in cyberbullying;

- making complaints about the school or its staff via social media, rather than through the school's official channels;
- making defamatory statements about the school or its staff;
- posting negative or offensive comments about specific pupils or staff;
- posting racist, discriminatory or otherwise prejudiced comments;
- posting comments which threaten or incite violence;
- posting personal or confidential information about an individual, including photographs or videos of other people's children, without consent;
- sharing screenshots of private communications, such as emails, messages from staff, or the school's learning platform, without consent.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social media or the internet in an inappropriate manner. Parents are expected to explain to their children what is acceptable to post online and are expected to monitor their children's online activity, including their use of social media, in line with the guidance and support the school provides through its online safety communications (see the Online Safety Policy).

Cyberbullying

Bexton Primary School is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community — staff, parents, governors, carers and pupils — are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment of any kind, including cyberbullying, will not be tolerated. Cyberbullying can include text messages, emails, phone calls, messaging apps, sharing photos or videos, or posting comments on social media, blogs, forums or in chat rooms.

Concerns about cyberbullying involving pupils are managed in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour for Learning Policy. Concerns about the bullying or harassment of staff should be reported to the Headteacher and will be managed in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and, where appropriate, the procedure set out below.

Procedure the School Will Follow if Inappropriate Use Continues

The school will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner, and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social media inappropriately, as set out in this policy. As a first step, the school will usually discuss the matter directly with the parent, to try to resolve it and to ask that the material in question be removed. Where a parent does not do this, and continues to use social media in a way the school considers inappropriate, the school may:

- set out its concerns in writing, including a formal warning and a request that the material be removed;
- report the content directly to the relevant platform, which has its own duties under the Online Safety Act 2023 to act on reports of harmful content;
- restrict or block the individual's access to any school-run website, page or online forum;
- contact the police, where the school considers a criminal offence may have been committed, or where a post is threatening, grossly offensive, or has a racial or other discriminatory element; and/or
- take legal advice and/or legal action, where content posted is defamatory or the circumstances otherwise warrant this.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there is a significant change in guidance, legislation, or the platforms used by the school or its community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Online Safety Policy

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy