Sudley
Primary School

Social Media Guidelines for Parents & Carers

Statement of Intent

Sudley Primary School values the role of social media in communication and community building. However, misuse can negatively impact school's reputation, undermine trust, cause distress, and potentially breach safeguarding protocols. The school is committed to protecting pupils from harm and ensuring that staff can carry out their roles, free from harassment or abuse.

These guidelines are intended to help parents and carers use social media responsibly and respectfully and align with relevant UK legislation including:

- GDPR 2018
- Defamation Act 2013
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

The "Three Commons" Approach

To maintain a respectful and safe online environment, the school promotes:

- **Common Courtesy** – Treat others online as you would in person.
- **Common Decency** – Avoid sharing anything offensive or inappropriate.
- **Common Sense** – Think before you post, especially about the consequences.

Why These Guidelines Matter

Inappropriate use of social media can:

- Jeopardise the **safeguarding** of children by sharing confidential information.
- Cause **offence**, **distress**, or **damage reputations** of staff, children, or other families.
- Escalate complaints or disputes in a public and damaging way.

Unacceptable Online Behaviour Includes:

- Posting or forwarding **hurtful**, **rude**, **abusive**, **racist**, **sexist**, **homophobic**, or **defamatory** comments about:
    - Staff
    - Children
    - Governors
    - Other parents/carers
    - The school itself
- **Cyberbullying** or harassment via comments or messaging apps.
- **Public criticism** of school values, policies, or practices.
- **Discussing individual children** or school issues online.
- **Posting images or videos** of children or staff without permission.
- **Creating unofficial groups** using the school's name or logo without permission (a copyright breach).
- **Anonymously posting** or using false identities to avoid accountability.

Use of Social Media and Messaging Apps

Sudley Primary acknowledges the value of messaging apps like WhatsApp for parent communication. However, these should be used constructively. Unacceptable use includes:

- Sharing **abusive messages** or **negative comments** about anyone in the school community, including staff and children.
- Using messaging groups to spread **rumours**, **complaints**, or **hostile content**.

Boundaries Between Parents and Staff

- Parents/carers should **not 'friend' or 'follow' staff** on personal social media accounts unless by prior agreement.
- **Photographs or videos of other children or staff** should not be taken or shared online.

What to Do If You Have a Concern

- Concerns about the school should be raised **directly** through the appropriate channels, following the **school complaints policy**.
- **Do not use social media** to voice concerns, share complaints or criticisms.
- If parents and carers are aware of any communications that breach these guidelines, we ask that they alert the school at the first opportunity.

School's Rights and Responsibilities

- The Leadership and Governors take safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately.
- Sudley Primary reserves the right to **request removal** of any inappropriate or harmful online content.
- **Breaches** will be taken seriously and may be reported to platform administrators.
- Safeguarding the wellbeing of children and staff is a top priority. The school will respond promptly and directly to any issues that arise.

Monitoring and Review

These guidelines are reviewed annually. Any updates will be shared with parents, carers, staff, and governors.