Social Media Policy for Ingleby Greenhow CofE Primary School

Our SM presence

Ingleby Greenhow CofE VC Primary 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.

Mrs Norris is responsible for managing our Facebook and checking our Wikipedia and Google reviews and other mentions online.

Staff, pupils' and parents' SM presence

Social media (including 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 (particularly for staff) 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 https://www.inglebygreenhow.n-yorks.sch.uk/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+), but the school regularly deals with issues arising on social media involving pupils/students under the age of 13. 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. 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 (you don't need to know them – ask your child to explain it to you), with whom, for how long, and when (late at night / in bedrooms is not helpful for a good night's sleep and productive teaching and learning at school the next day). You may wish to refer to the Digital Family Agreement to help establish shared expectations and the Top Tips for Parents poster along with relevant items and support available from parentsafe.lgfl.net and introduce the Children's Commission Digital 5 A Day.

Although the school has an official Facebook / X-Twitter / Instagram account and will respond to general enquiries about the school, it asks parents/carers not to use these channels, especially not to communicate about their children.

Email is the official electronic communication channel between parents and the school. Social media, including chat apps such as WhatsApp, are not appropriate for school use.

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) as laid out in the AUPs. 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/Principal, and should be declared upon entry of the pupil or staff member to the school).

Social Media Policy for Ingleby Greenhow CofE Primary School

** 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).

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 there has been a significant number of 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 **Error! Reference source not found.** and permission is sought before uploading photographs, videos or any other information about other people.

The statements of the Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) which all members of the school community have signed are also relevant to social media activity, as is the school's Data Protection Policy.

Social media incidents

See the social media section later in this document for rules and expectations of behaviour for children and adults in the Ingleby Greenhow CofE Primary School's community. These are also governed by school Acceptable Use Policies and the school social media policy.

Breaches will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or 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, Ingleby Greenhow Primary 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.

Social Media Policy for Ingleby Greenhow CofE Primary School

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 Mrs Norris 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 Mrs Norris in the first instance, who may then call on the expertise of local authority advisers, LGfL SafeguardED or Professionals' Online-Safety Helpline (from UK SIC).