The Gateway Primary Academy

Social Media Policy

September 2026

Key Details

Nominated Member of Leadership Staff Responsible for the policy: Mr J Cassem

Designated Safeguarding Lead (s): Mr J Cassem

Named Governor with lead responsibility: Mr F Westmorland

Date written: September 2026

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: To be shared at Term 1 Governing Body meeting

Date of next review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed **at least** annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedures.

1. Policy aims and scope

- This policy has been written by The Gateway, involving staff, pupils and parents/carers, building on the Kent County Council LADO Education Safeguarding Advisory Service Social Media policy template, with specialist advice and input as required.
- It takes into account the Department for Education (DfE) guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE), Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS), 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'(WTSC) 'Behaviour in Schools Advice for headteachers and school staff' 'Mobile Phones in Schools', 'Preventing and Tackling the Bullying and Harassment of School Staff', 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 The Gateway community when using social media.
    - The Gateway 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), Jamiel Cassem (Headteacher) has 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 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).

2. Links with other policies

- This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans, including but not limited to:
    - Anti-bullying policy
    - Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
    - Behaviour and discipline policy
    - Cameras and image use policy
    - Child protection policy
    - Home-school agreement / parental code of conduct
    - Staff code of conduct

- Confidentiality policy
- Complaints policy
- Curriculum policies, such as: Computing, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Data security
- Mobile phone and smart devices

3. General social media expectations

- The Gateway 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 is addressed in our child protection policy.
- No use of social media is permitted whilst using school devices may result in removal of internet access and/or disciplinary action. Staff may use their own devices to access social media in their break times away from children.
- The use of social media or apps, for example as a formal remote learning platform or education tool will be robustly risk assessed by the DSL and Deputy Headteacher prior to use with learners. Any use will take place in accordance with our existing policies, for example, our AUP and online safety policy (in our child protection policy 2026).
- We expect members of our school community to use social media responsibly and respectfully. Concerns about the school, whether it's staff or pupils should be raised through the school published procedures wherever possible. Online conduct that is abusive, harassing, threatening, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate may be addressed in line with relevant policies and procedures and, where appropriate, reported to external agencies.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of The Gateway community on social media will be taken seriously. This includes concerns relating to online complaints, harassment, intimidation or abuse directed towards staff, children or other members of the community. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the appropriate policies, including anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour, home school-agreements, staff behaviour/code of conduct, Acceptable Use Policies, and child protection.

4. Staff use of social media

- The use of social media during school hours for personal use is permitted for staff via the use of staff's own mobile devices in an area of the school away from children e.g. in the staffroom and during only during designated break times.
- Safe and professional online behaviour is outlined for all members of staff, including volunteers, as part of our staff 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 their induction. Staff play a key role in creating an environment where pupils feel safe to discuss their online experiences and report concerns. 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.
- Staff should be mindful of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence tools and automated features, and must not use these in ways which could compromise confidentiality, professional standards or the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

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.
- Members of staff are advised that content shared on social media may be widely viewed, copied or redistributed beyond their control. All members of staff are therefore 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 The Gateway 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 with our policies and the wider professional reputation and legal frameworks, for example, the Teacher's Standards. 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 and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately if they have concerns about content shared online which may impact their role, the setting, or the safety and wellbeing of children.

4.2 Communicating with pupils and their families

- Staff will not use any personal social media accounts to contact pupils or their family members. This is to maintain clear professional boundaries and safeguard both children and staff.
- 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 (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.

5. Responding to policy breaches

- The Gateway recognises that online abuse, bullying, harassment or intimidation of staff is unacceptable. Concerns involving harmful, abusive or threatening online behaviour towards staff by pupils, parents/carers or members of the wider community will be taken seriously , recorded as appropriate, and responded to in line with relevant policies and procedures, including behaviour, complaints, staff conduct, safeguarding and, where appropriate, police reporting processes. The Gateway expects all communication, including communication via social media, to be respectful and constructive.
- Concerns relating to photographs, videos or other images shared via social media, including inappropriate sharing, unauthorised publication, misuse, manipulation or the

use of artificial intelligence to create, alter or generate imagery, will be taken seriously. The school will respond in line with safeguarding, child protection, data protection and behaviour procedures. This may include removing content where possible, recording concerns, supporting affected individuals and seeking advice from, or reporting concerns to, external agencies where appropriate.

- 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: our child protection policy.
- 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 (or a deputy) will seek advice from the local authority or other agencies, as appropriate, in accordance with our child protection policy.

6. Policy monitoring and review

- Technology evolves and changes rapidly. The Gateway 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: AUPs, staff training and staff code of conduct.