



# St Thomas' CE Primary School

## Social Media Policy

Adopted by The Heaton's Primary Cluster and  
St Thomas' CE Primary School



## **Statement of intent**

St Thomas' School understands that social media is a growing part of life outside of school. We have a responsibility to safeguard our students against potential dangers when accessing the internet at school, and to educate our students about how to protect themselves online when outside of St Thomas' School.

We are committed to:

- Educating our students, parents and staff about the safe use of social media.
- Encouraging the responsible use of social media.
- Protecting our students from the dangers of social media.
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the school through irresponsible use of social media.
- Protecting our staff from cyber bullying and potentially career damaging behaviour.

Signed by: Karen Morris

Date: June 2016

Head teacher

Signed by: Mr Andrew Whittell

Date: June 2016

Chair of Governors

## **1. Key roles and responsibilities**

- 1.1. The governing body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy and procedures of St Thomas' School.
- 1.2. The governing body has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- 1.3. The governing body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Policy.
- 1.4. The head teacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures of St Thomas' School.
- 1.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Social Media Policy and for ensuring students do so also. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
- 1.6. Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the social media habits of their child/children at home.
- 1.7. Parents and carers will be expected to promote safe social media behaviour.

## **2. The school's e-safety team and network manager**

- 2.1. The school's e-safety team consists of: Karen Morris (Head teacher), Paul Campen (Deputy Head teacher), Louise Loynes (Deputy Head teacher) and Chris Kemal (Computing co-ordinator).

## **3. Definitions**

- 3.1. St Thomas' School defines "social media" as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including but not limited to:
  - Blogs
  - Online discussion forums
  - Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook.
  - Media sharing services, such as YouTube.
  - 'Micro-blogging' applications, such as Twitter.
- 3.2. St Thomas' School defines "cyber bullying" as any use of social media or communication technology to bully an individual or group.
- 3.3. St Thomas' School defines "members of the school community" as any member of staff, student, parent/carers of student, governor or ex-student.

The definition also covers friends, relatives or associates of students/ex-students or parents/carers.

#### **4. Training of staff**

- 4.1. At St Thomas' School, we recognise that early intervention can protect students who may be at risk of cyber bullying or negative social media behaviour.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Social Media Policy as part of their Safeguarding induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and on-going e-safety training as part of their professional development.

#### **5. Social media use - staff**

- 5.1. Members of staff may not access social media during lesson time, unless it is part of a curriculum activity. However, staff may use social networking during non-contact time in a private area away from students.
- 5.2. Teachers may use social media during their break times and lunchtimes in a private area away from students unless they are on duty.
- 5.3. Members of staff **must not** "friend" or otherwise contact students or ex-students through social media.
- 5.4. If students or ex-students attempt to "friend" or otherwise contact members of staff through social media, they should be reported to the head teacher.
- 5.5. Members of staff should avoid identifying themselves as an employee of St Thomas' School on social media.
- 5.6. Members of staff **must not** post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or students.
- 5.7. Where teachers or members of staff use social media in a personal capacity, they should make it clear that their views are personal.
- 5.8. Teachers or members of staff must not post any information which could identify a student, class or the school. This includes any images of students, staff, the school or students' work.
- 5.9. Members of staff should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- 5.10. Breaches of this policy by members of staff will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, could lead to prosecution, disciplinary action or dismissal.

- 5.11. Members of staff should be aware that if their online activity during work or out of work hours brings St Thomas' School into disrepute, disciplinary action will be taken.
- 5.12. Members of staff should regularly check their online presence for negative content via search engines.
- 5.13. Attempts to bully, coerce or manipulate members of the school community, via social media, by members of staff will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.
- 5.14. Members of staff should not leave a computer or other device logged on when away from their desk.
- 5.15. Staff members should use their school email address for school business and personal email address for their private correspondence; the two should not be mixed.

## **6. Social media use – students and parents/carers**

- 6.1. Students may not access social media during the school day.
- 6.2. Breaches of this policy by students will be taken seriously, and in the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content could lead to prosecution, or exclusion.
- 6.3. Students **must not** attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact members of staff through social media. If attempts to contact members of staff through social media are made, they will be reported to the head teacher.
- 6.4. If members of staff attempt to “friend” or otherwise contact students or ex-students through social media, they should be reported to the head teacher.
- 6.5. Students and parents/carers should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.
- 6.6. Students and parents/carers **must not** post content online which is damaging to the school or any of its staff or students.
- 6.7. Students at St Thomas' School must not sign up to social media sites that have an age restriction above the student's age.
- 6.8. If students or parents are aware that inappropriate content has been accessed online on school premises, it **must** be reported immediately.

## **7. Blocked content**

- 7.1. All social media websites are blocked by the network's firewalls:
- 7.2. Attempts to circumvent the network's firewalls will result in a ban from using school computing equipment.

7.3. Inappropriate content which is accessed on the school computers should be reported, so that the site can be blocked.

## **8. Cyber bullying**

- 8.1. At St Thomas' School cyber bullying is taken seriously.
- 8.2. Incidents of cyber bullying that occur during the school day will be dealt with in line with the schools' bullying policy.
- 8.3. Incidents of cyber bullying that occur outside of the school day should be reported to parents/carers. Families should then decide whether to contact the networking site to report the issue, CEOP and/or the police.
- 8.4. Staff members should never respond or retaliate to cyber bullying incidents. Incidents should instead be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and to the police.
- 8.5. Evidence from the incident should be saved, including screen prints of messages or web pages, and the time and date of the incident.
- 8.6. Where the perpetrator is a parent/carer, he/she will be invited into school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will be asked to remove the offensive content.
- 8.7. If the perpetrator refuses to comply, it is up to the school to decide what to do next. This could include contacting the internet service provider in question through their reporting mechanisms, if the offensive content breaches their terms and conditions.
- 8.8. If the material is threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitutes a hate crime, the school should consider contacting the police.
- 8.9. As part of our on-going commitment to the prevention of cyber bullying, regular education and discussion about e-safety will take place as part of computing and PSHE.

## **9. Sexting**

- 9.1 St Thomas' School takes sexting very seriously. We will report any incidents of sexting including the possession and distribution of child pornography to parents and the police.
- 9.2 St Thomas' School will always try to establish who has possessed or distributed an indecent image so that we are able to provide the police with accurate information.
- 9.3 St Thomas' School will use the DfE's current advice Searching, Screening and Confiscation to search phones if we believe they contain pornographic material.

## 10. Be SMART online

10.1. We encourage students to take a SMART approach to social media behaviour:

- **Safe** – Do not give out personal information, or post photos of yourself to people you talk to online. Follow age restriction rules.
- **Meeting** – Do not meet somebody you have only met online. We encourage parents/carers to speak regularly to their children about who they are talking to online.
- **Accepting** – We advise that students only open emails and other forms of communication from people they already know.
- **Reliable** – We teach students about the dangers of believing everything they see online.
- **Tell** – We encourage students to tell a teacher, parent or carer if they see anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable.

