

Sandwell School Social Media Guidance

What is social media?

Social media is the term given to websites, online tools and applications that allow users to interact, often by sharing information, images, video, opinions, knowledge and interest. Social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

Common social media formats include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Live.me, LinkedIn, Bebo, blogs, podcasts, YouTube and Flickr. Social media is changing all the time and new channels are always appearing – so this list is not exhaustive.

Social media also includes video and gaming apps and software that allows online communication, posting of comments and sharing of videos – either pre-recorded and uploaded or live streaming (for example but not limited to Musical.ly and Roblox).

Staying safe on social media

Staying safe online and on social media is taught in school, this includes:

- What to post
- What not to post
- Online dangers and how children can be coerced or “groomed”
- Privacy settings and how to regularly check them.

All of this is detailed in the school’s ICT policy.

The school hopes that by sharing this guidance with parents, carers and pupils we can:

- Encourage and educate pupils to stay safe online
- Protect pupils and staff from cyberbullying
- Make parents and carers aware of how they can protect their children when they are online
- Encourage parents and carers to support this policy.

Advice for parents

We want parents and carers to support the work we do around staying safe online and preventing cyberbullying.

- Monitor your child's social media presence including their privacy settings, what they post and comment on as well as the responses they receive.
- Make sure your child does not share inappropriate details, images or videos of themselves or others.
- Check your child's privacy settings and supervise or restrict their use of social media if necessary.
- Encourage your child to use a profile name that is not their full name (where this meets with the social media platform's rules).
- It's strongly recommended that you do not share photos of or information about children other than your own on without the permission of the other child's parents/carers.
- If you share photos of your own children, be mindful that sharing personal details such as a child's full name, school name and class name alongside their photo can identify their child's whereabouts to others.
- Please don't make allegations or complaints about the school on social media.
- Make sure your own comments, images or videos relating to the school, its pupils or staff are fair, accurate and have the permission of all those who feature in them.
- Make sure you are happy with your own privacy settings when sharing photos of your child or children.

Advice for pupils

We want pupils to stay safe when using social media.

- Don't share private information (such as your address or full name) with people you don't know.
- Don't share anything that puts you or someone else in danger.
- Check your privacy settings – do you know who can see what you're sharing?
- Remember, once you've shared something online you no longer have control over it.
- Don't bully, harass or deliberately upset others.
- Don't share anything that negatively affects the reputation of the school.
- If you are worried about something you have seen on social media, speak to your parent or carer, teacher or head teacher.

Cyberbullying

- The school takes allegations of cyberbullying seriously and encourages pupils to report any concerns to a parent or carer, teacher or the headteacher.
- The school recognises that staff members can also be the victims of cyberbullying.

How the school will deal with complaints about social media

- If parents or pupils see inappropriate content about the school, its staff or pupils that could bring the school into disrepute, they should bring this to the attention of the head teacher.
- The school will, whenever possible, remove inappropriate content posted on school-administered social media sites.
- Parents or carers who have a concern about how social media is being used by a pupil, member of staff or another parent/carer should get in touch with the school.
- The school will decide if and how best to investigate any concerns. Parents/carers should avoid raising further complaints or making allegations using social media while this happens.
- Action may be taken against any pupil found to be engaging in inappropriate behaviour online.
- If a parent or carer makes claims about or allegations against the school, its staff or pupils on social media, they may be asked to remove comments that are abusive or inappropriate. In extreme cases, the school may seek legal advice.