Social Media Policy

Purpose and scope

Social media helps Portavogie Primary School share learning, celebrate achievements, promote school events and communicate positively with families. This policy sets expectations for official school channels, relevant professional conduct and the handling of concerns. It complements, rather than replaces, safeguarding, online safety and data protection procedures.

Account management and responsibility

The Principal, Mrs Victoria Murray, currently manages the official Portavogie Primary School Facebook page and is the only person authorised to publish posts or respond on behalf of the school. The principal checks photographs and permissions, manages comments and messages, and oversees account security. The ICT Coordinator, Miss Joanne Johnston, may advise on digital safety or technical matters but does not manage the Facebook page.

No other member of staff may publish posts, respond to messages or change settings on the school Facebook page unless the principal has expressly authorised this. Account access is protected by a strong password and multi-factor authentication where available. If responsibilities change, the principal will ensure that access permissions and this policy are reviewed.

Content and publication

Posts may include classroom learning, visits, sporting activities, school news, charity events and community achievements. They should be accurate, respectful and in keeping with the school's ethos and values.

Before posting, the authorised member of staff checks wording, photographs and background details, including badges, pupil work, names, location information and any potentially sensitive information. Individual attendance, behaviour, special educational needs, medical or safeguarding matters must never be discussed publicly.

Official social media supports general communication but is not the primary channel for urgent notices, confidential pupil matters or parent complaints. These should use established school contact arrangements.

Photographs and pupil privacy

The school checks current photography/publication permissions and any safeguarding restrictions before sharing identifiable pupil images, recordings or work. Permissions and objections must be recorded and accessible to staff who prepare posts.

The school minimises identifying information, normally avoids linking a child's full name to a recognisable image and does not publish private contact information or live location details that could create risk. Pupils' views about being photographed are respected.

Requests to remove school-published content are considered promptly by the Principal, with advice sought where appropriate. Deleting a post cannot guarantee copies have not been saved or shared elsewhere.

Schools must identify and communicate appropriate lawful basis for processing photographs and offer suitable opportunities to object or opt out. This policy's operational permission checks do not by themselves establish UK GDPR consent as the legal basis.

The school uses an annual Digital Images, Photographs and Video Consent Form. For 2026/27 it asks parents and carers to make separate Yes/No choices for: use within school; school printed publications; the school website; the official Portavogie Primary School Facebook page; newspapers or other recognised media; and trusted external organisations. These choices are not interchangeable. In particular, permission for classroom use or the website is not permission for Facebook.

Before publishing a Facebook post, the principal checks the current Facebook choice for every identifiable pupil shown and any additional safeguarding restriction. No response, an unclear answer or a No must not be taken as permission to post. Where a photograph contains a group, every identifiable pupil must be covered by the appropriate permission or excluded from the image.

Parents may change or withdraw their choices at any time by contacting the school. Changes apply to future use and are passed promptly to those preparing posts. On request, the school will remove images from channels it controls where reasonably possible, while explaining that copies saved or shared by other people may remain available. The school's privacy information sets out how images are processed under data protection law.

Comments, messages and complaints

The school may moderate, hide or remove comments containing personal information, discriminatory or abusive material, allegations about identifiable individuals, advertisements or other inappropriate content. Serious threatening or abusive messages are recorded appropriately before reporting or blocking, where safe and lawful.

Members of the school community should raise concerns through the school office or formal complaints arrangements rather than in public comment threads. Safeguarding concerns are referred immediately using the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school does not undertake to monitor social media continuously or respond outside reasonable working arrangements.

Staff personal social media

Staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries, confidentiality and conduct consistent with their role. Staff must not communicate privately with pupils through personal social media accounts or share confidential information, pupil photographs or internal school matters without proper authorisation.

This policy does not seek to regulate lawful private expression generally. Concerns about conduct which affects safeguarding, confidentiality or professional responsibilities are managed through the relevant school and employer procedures.

Parents, carers and event photography

Parents and carers may take photographs at school events where the school permits it, subject to any event-specific safeguarding restrictions or instructions. They are asked not to publicly share images of other children without appropriate permission.

Private household photography is treated differently under data protection law from official school publication; any school restrictions on photography should be based on clear safeguarding or event-management reasons.

AI, altered images and online abuse

Staff must not publish synthetic or substantially altered representations of pupils or staff that could mislead or cause harm. Photos and videos should be reviewed with awareness of AI manipulation risks and the potential for images to be copied and reused.

Suspected image-based abuse, impersonation, online harassment or threats are reported promptly to the principal and, where safeguarding is involved, the Designated Teacher. The school will consider platform reporting, evidence preservation and appropriate EA or police advice.

Monitoring and review

The principal reviews the effectiveness of official social media arrangements and authorised access periodically. This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if platforms, school practice, legal requirements or safeguarding advice change.

Related guidance

Read with the school's Online Safety (E-Safety), Safeguarding and Child Protection, ICT, Addressing Bullying, Positive Behaviour and Complaints policies and data protection arrangements.

Guidance considered: EA How to Guide – Social Media (updated 23 July 2026); Information Commissioner's Office guidance on taking photographs in schools and children's personal data; DE online safety and safeguarding guidance.