

St Alban's Catholic High School



Social Media Policy

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Online Safety and Social Media:

Date	Designated Online Safety Lead	Deputy Designated Senior person	Nominated Governor	Chair of Governors
March 2025	Aliyah Harries	H Arthur M Bush	Austine Adigwe	Phil Dance

Approved by Full Governing Body on: 17th March 2025

Recommission Date: March 2026

Policy statement:

We understand that your personal social media profiles are your own. However, what you post and, more generally, your actions on social media (whether personal or professional use) can impact our reputation and jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations (such as to keep personal data secure and certain information confidential). Social media (e.g. Facebook, X, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Whatsapp, Pinterest, Instagram etc) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However, some games for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as You Tube also have social media elements to them.

St. Alban's Catholic High School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities, which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by St. Alban's Catholic High School, its staff, parents, carers and children.

Scope:

This policy is subject to the school's Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements.

This policy:

- This policy applies to all employees, governors, directors and other officers, workers and agency workers, volunteers and trainees and to all online communications which directly or indirectly, represent the school
- Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere.
- Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education
- Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school

The school respects privacy and understands that social media can be a big part of people's private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications, which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with staff/students are also considered. Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes, but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications. The child's learning needs, maturity and time of this communication should also be considered.

Organisational control:

Roles & Responsibilities

- **SLT**
 - Facilitating training and guidance on Social Media use
 - Developing and implementing the Social Media policy
 - Taking a lead role in investigating any reported incidents
 - Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving Appropriate staff and external agencies as required.
 - Receive completed applications for Social Media accounts
 - Approve account creation
- **Administrator / Moderator**
 - Create the account following SLT approval
 - Store account details, including passwords securely
 - Be involved in monitoring and contributing to the account
 - Control the process for managing an account after the lead staff member has left the organisation (closing or transferring)
- **Employees/trainees/Volunteers/Agency staff**
 - Know the contents of and ensure that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
 - Attending appropriate training
 - Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via school accounts
 - Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the school

Process for creating new accounts:

The school community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department X account, or a “Friends of the school” Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must complete the application form in appendix 2 covering the following points:-

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will manage the account (where possible at least two staff members should be named)

Following consideration by the SLT an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the SLT must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents. Approved applications will be added to the school social media register using document Appendix 3.

Monitoring:

School accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts must be responded to within 48 hours (or on the next working day if received at a weekend) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour:

- The school requires that all those using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media staff must follow the school media policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant member of SLT and escalated where appropriate.
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally in line with the school's policies and procedures. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies in addition to internal processes.

Legal considerations:

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.
- Users must ensure that their use of social media does not infringe upon relevant data protection laws or breach confidentiality.

Handling abuse:

- When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone:

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards.

Use of images:

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes must be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts.
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately and inform a member of SLT that they have done so. They should also ask a member of IT to ensure that it is efficiently deleted.

Personal use:

- **Staff**

Personal communications are those made via a personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy

- Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy
- The school has the right to discuss and take disciplinary action if a staff's previous social media use and comments come to light, which is against the ethos and values of the school
- If a staff member feels that their account has in some way been accessed by a student they must report this to a member of SLT immediately.

- **Student(s)**

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current students of the school on any personal social media network account. When considering engaging with prior students, staff must ensure that students are at least 2 years older than the maximum age they could attend the school (ie. 2 years after Year 13).
- The school's education programme should enable the students(s) to be safe and responsible users of social media.

- Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy
- **Parents/Carers**
 - If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
 - The school has an active parent/carer education programme which supports the safe and positive use of social media. This includes information on the website.
 - Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

Monitoring posts about the school

- As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to pro-actively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.
- The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

Signed by Phil Dance, Chair of Governors:

Date:

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

- Nothing on social media is truly private
- Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Never use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts
- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to. When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post. If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach GDPR, copyright or any other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Application for school social media account

Name:

Department:

Social Media Platform (i.e. X, Facebook, Pinterest):

The aim of the account:

The intended audience:

How the account will be promoted:

Account managers:

Open or private/closed account:

Approved

☐

Approved by:

Date:

Rejected

☐

Rejected by:

Date:

Reasons for rejection:

Register of St. Albans's Catholic High School Social Media Accounts

Account manager

Approval date

Creation date

Social media platform

Open or private account

Account name

Account URL