Social Media Policy

Policy

Social Media Policy

Headteacher

Chris Stokes

Policy Review Dates

Review Date	Changes made	By whom	Date shared with staff
19/9/24	Addition of actions in respect of abuse of other users (non-staff)	C Stokes	20/6/24
09/09/25	Annual check of policy. Addition of reference to comments made on other pages outside of the school's direct control.	C Stokes	09/09/25
27/09/27	Review only, no changes	C Stokes	27/09/27

Date ratified by Governors	Review Date
September 2026	September 2027

1. Introduction

The use of social media by organisations, including schools is now commonplace. It's use, however, offers both opportunities and risks that need to be managed carefully.

Alongside the school website, Bedale High School uses the following forms of social media:

- Facebook
- X (Formally Twitter)
- Instagram

Social media accounts are managed by Senior Leaders, or those with delegated responsibility as approved by the Headteacher.

This policy sets out the procedure to add content to social media, how content should be managed, and how engagement, usually in the form of comments should be managed.

2. Adding Content to Social Media

All content that is added to social media must be approved by a Senior Leader.

Content that is added should fall into one of the following categories:

- Information Giving
- Celebration

It should never be the case that content added to social media is targeted at a small group e.g. a small group of students are persistently breaking a particular school rule. Direct communication should be considered in such an instance.

When adding content to social media, due consideration should be given to the likely response from external stakeholders, and what the strategy is for managing to content once it is placed online. All efforts should be made to ensure that content added to social media will present the school, its staff, and its students in a positive light.

When adding content which includes photos of students, careful consideration must be given to whether the school holds photo permission for the student. Where it does not, the photo must not be placed online. Where the school holds photo permission and uses an image, but this is then withdrawn, all reasonable steps must be taken to remove the photo.

3. Managing Content

Once content is added to social media, the person who added the content becomes responsible for its management, including responding to any comments that are made.

Where the person who added the content will not be able to manage the content, consideration should be given to either:

- Adding the content at a later time / date.

- Removing the comment facility from the post.

4. Responding to Comments

In the majority of cases, comments which are made on social media by external stakeholders are positive and helpful to others. In some cases, however, the comments made may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Abusive of members of staff.
- Seeking to spread misinformation.

Abuse of members of staff (or other online users) through social media will not be tolerated. This includes both on the school social media page, and elsewhere on the internet. In such cases where the comment is posted on the school's social media page, the abusive comment should be captured and then removed. The person who made the abusive comment should then be blocked from the social media page. Where the comment is made on an external page / site, the person comment should be captured, reported, and the person blocked from the school's social media site to avoid the risk of further comments being made on the school social media page. All instances of external parties being blocked from social media should be reported to the Headteacher. In extreme cases, consideration will be given to whether the abusive comment should be reported to the police. In all cases, the reinstatement of the user will only be considered where an apology is received and an assurance that no further comments of this nature will be posted online.

Abusive comments are defined as those which have the potential to cause upset to a member of staff (or other online user) directly, or indirectly. They are usually personal in nature about the individual, or their work, or used to mock or laugh at others views / opinions. Indirect comments would typically not name the person, but the description / suggestion of the person would be able to be reasonably interpreted.

Comments which are seeking to spread misinformation should be removed using the 'hide comment' feature. In extreme cases, they may be deleted. Where misinformation is presented, where possible the external stakeholder should be contacted to discuss their views. Where this behaviour continues, at the discretion of the Headteacher, the user may be blocked from commenting on future posts.

When responding to comments, members of staff should remember that not everyone will agree with the content of the post. It is important never to engage in an argument with an external stakeholder online. If a comment posted disagrees with the post but does not fall into the two categories above, a decision should be made as to whether to ignore the comment and follow up with a phone call at a later time or hide the comment until it can be addressed. Comments which disagree with the post should not routinely be deleted unless there is an exceptional reason to do so.