

Social Media Policy



Policy Written: June 2026

Next Review: Annual – next review September 2029

Date Ratified by LGB: June 2026

1. Introduction

At Barnes Infant Academy, we recognise that social media provides valuable opportunities to celebrate learning, strengthen relationships with families and promote the achievements of our children.

Social media can be a powerful communication tool when used safely, responsibly and professionally. However, inappropriate use of social media can present significant safeguarding, reputational and legal risks.

This policy establishes clear expectations for the use of social media by staff, governors, volunteers, parents and carers and supports the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

All social media activity should reflect the values and ethos of Barnes Infant Academy and support our commitment to creating a culture of belonging, respect and positive relationships.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible use of social media.
 - Safeguard children, staff and families.
 - Protect the reputation of Barnes Infant Academy.
 - Establish clear expectations regarding professional conduct online.
 - Promote positive engagement with parents and the wider community.
 - Ensure compliance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.
 - Provide clear procedures for managing concerns arising through social media.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Governors
- Volunteers
- Agency staff

- Contractors
- Students on placement
- Anyone acting on behalf of the school

The policy applies to:

- Official school social media accounts
 - Personal social media use where it may affect the school
 - School-related online communication
 - Emerging technologies and platforms
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4. Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of this policy, social media includes but is not limited to:

- Facebook
 - Instagram
 - TikTok
 - X (formerly Twitter)
 - Snapchat
 - WhatsApp
 - YouTube
 - Threads
 - LinkedIn
 - Online forums
 - Messaging applications
 - Gaming platforms with communication functions
 - Any future social networking technologies
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5. Official School Social Media Platforms

Barnes Infant Academy currently operates:

- Facebook

- Instagram
- Class Dojo
- School Website

The school may establish additional platforms where approved by the Headteacher.

6. Social Media Leadership

The Deputy Headteacher, Joe Durham, is the designated Social Media Lead.

The Social Media Lead is responsible for:

- Overseeing all school social media activity.
- Approving content for publication.
- Monitoring compliance with this policy.
- Ensuring image permissions are adhered to.
- Monitoring the school's online reputation.
- Responding to concerns relating to social media.
- Liaising with the Headteacher regarding significant issues.

The Headteacher retains overall responsibility for the school's social media presence.

7. Account Security

Access to official social media accounts will be restricted to authorised staff only.

The school will ensure:

- Passwords are secure.
 - Login details are not shared inappropriately.
 - Passwords are changed when staff leave.
 - Passwords are changed immediately where security concerns arise.
 - Two-factor authentication is enabled where available.
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8. Content Creation and Approval

Teaching staff may take photographs using school-approved devices and submit content for consideration.

All Facebook and Instagram content must be approved by the Social Media Lead before publication.

Class Dojo content may be posted directly by authorised staff, provided it complies with this policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Only authorised staff may publish content on behalf of the school.

9. Image Use and Consent

Barnes Infant Academy adopts a safeguarding-first approach to the use of images.

The school will:

- Use images that celebrate learning and achievement.
- Minimise the identification of individual pupils wherever possible.
- Ensure appropriate parental consent is in place.
- Never publish children's full names alongside photographs.
- Remove images where consent is withdrawn.

Staff must:

- Use school-approved devices only.
- Follow image consent arrangements.
- Ensure photographs are appropriate and professional.

Staff must not:

- Use personal devices to photograph pupils.
 - Store pupil images on personal devices.
 - Upload pupil images from personal social media accounts.
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10. Safeguarding and Online Safety

Online safety is recognised as a safeguarding issue.

Concerns may include:

- Misinformation
- Disinformation
- Cyberbullying
- Harassment
- Discriminatory behaviour
- Child-on-child abuse
- Online grooming
- Exploitation
- Extremist content
- Sharing of personal information
- Misuse of images

Any concerns identified through social media will be managed in accordance with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- KCSIE

Where necessary, concerns may be referred to external agencies.

Only the following staff members are authorised to upload content to official school social media platforms:

Mr J Durham (Deputy Headteacher and Social Media Lead)

Miss C Robinson (KS1 Lead)

Mrs S Bell (Headteacher)

11. Reporting Concerns

Any member of staff who becomes aware of inappropriate online content involving:

- a pupil
- a parent/carer
- a member of staff

- the school

must report the concern immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff should not investigate concerns independently.

12. Class Dojo

Class Dojo is an approved school communication platform.

It may be used for:

- Celebrating learning.
- Sharing class information.
- Routine educational communication.

It must not be used for:

- Safeguarding disclosures.
- Complaints.
- Discussions regarding other children.
- Confidential matters.
- Emergency communications.

Where concerns arise, parents will be directed to the appropriate school procedures.

13. Communication with Parents and Pupils

Professional boundaries must be maintained at all times.

Communication with pupils and parents must take place through approved school systems only.

Staff must not:

- Communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts.
- Communicate with parents through personal social media accounts.
- Use personal WhatsApp, Messenger, Instagram, Snapchat or similar platforms for school business.
- Use personal email accounts for school communication.

14. Personal Use of Social Media

Staff are entitled to use social media in their personal lives.

However, staff must ensure that their online activity does not undermine:

- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Professional standards.
- Public confidence.
- The reputation of the school.

Staff must not:

- Discuss pupils online.
- Discuss parents online.
- Discuss colleagues online.
- Share confidential information.
- Post content that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Post images from school activities on personal accounts.

Staff are strongly encouraged to maintain appropriate privacy settings.

Conduct on personal social media accounts may be considered under disciplinary procedures where it impacts professional relationships, safeguarding responsibilities or the reputation of the school.

15. Professional Boundaries

Staff must not:

- Accept friend requests from current pupils.
- Send friend requests to current pupils.
- Accept friend requests from parents or carers of current pupils.
- Send friend requests to parents or carers of current pupils.
- Follow pupils on social media.
- Communicate privately with pupils through social media.

Where a pre-existing family or community relationship exists, professional boundaries must still be maintained.

16. Staff Messaging Applications

Applications such as WhatsApp may be used for operational communication where approved by school leaders.

They must not be used to discuss:

- Safeguarding concerns.
- Confidential pupil information.
- Personnel matters.
- Sensitive parental issues.

Safeguarding concerns must always be reported through established school procedures.

17. Expectations of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Engage respectfully online.
 - Support a positive online community.
 - Avoid posting images of other children without permission.
 - Avoid making allegations about staff, pupils or families online.
 - Follow the school's Complaints Procedure where concerns arise.
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18. Governors

Governors are expected to adhere to this policy.

Governors must not use social media to discuss:

- Confidential governing body business.
- Individual pupils.
- Parents or carers.
- Members of staff.

19. Complaints and Inappropriate Use

Social media should not be used to raise complaints about the school.

Complaints raised through social media will be redirected to the school's Complaints Procedure.

The school reserves the right to:

- Remove comments.
- Disable comments.
- Block users.
- Retain evidence.
- Report content.
- Seek legal advice.
- Involve external agencies where appropriate.

Abusive, threatening, discriminatory or defamatory content may be referred to the Police.

20. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Staff must not create, publish or share AI-generated, manipulated or altered content involving pupils, parents, staff or the school without explicit authorisation from the Headteacher.

Any misuse of AI-generated content may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

21. Monitoring and Review

Official school social media accounts will be monitored regularly by the Social Media Lead and members of the Senior Leadership Team.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where changes to legislation, safeguarding guidance or operational practice require amendment.

Appendix 1 – Social Media Approval Workflow

Stage	Responsibility
Photograph Taken	Teaching Staff (School Device)
Consent Checked	Teaching Staff
Content Submitted	Teaching Staff
Approval	Social Media Lead
Publication	Authorised Staff

Appendix 2 – Barnes Social Media Golden Rules for Staff

- Safeguarding comes first.
- Think before you post.
- Always check the school consent list before uploading or submitting images and never post images of children where parental consent has not been granted.
- Never discuss pupils online.
- Never discuss parents online.
- Never discuss colleagues online.
- Do not add current parents as personal friends.
- Do not communicate with pupils through personal accounts.
- Use school systems only.
- Keep personal accounts private.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Never use personal devices to store pupil images.