Social Networking Policy

Adopted: October 2026

Review: September 2027

William Cobbett Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Overview

Social networking sites such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that can positively enhance communication. The school recognises that most stakeholders use social media in a positive and responsible manner. However, for a minority, such sites can be used inappropriately to express negative or offensive views about the school and its staff instead of approaching the school directly, where most concerns can be addressed and resolved. This document sets out the school's approach to the use of social networking sites and the procedures that will be followed where such facilities are used inappropriately.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding, when photographs are shared on the school's social media platforms, only images showing the backs of children's heads, side profiles, or photographs of children's work will be published. Staff are responsible for checking and adhering to the photo permissions of all children in their class and for any photographs taken during year group visits, trips, educational activities, or school events before content is uploaded or shared. This approach helps ensure that children's privacy and parental preferences are always respected.

What social networks are being used at William Cobbett and what are their purpose?

X

X (formally known as Twitter) is used primarily as a method of communication. X users are able to follow or be followed. To follow somebody/thing ensures that all of their activity and comments appear in the follower's news feed. The obvious benefit of having followers is that the information you broadcast is instantly distributed into their news feed. X uses can use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in their Tweet to categorize those Tweets and help them show more easily in X search. Clicking or tapping on a 'hash tagged' word in any message shows you other Tweets that include that hashtag. Hashtags can be included anywhere in a Tweet and will only be used in correspondence with appropriate and relevant language and vocabulary. Users can also privately message each other when they don't want conversations to appear. William Cobbett Primary School will not enter into private discussions with others.

Facebook

Like X, Facebook is used as a method of communication. William Cobbett Primary School Social Media account will be used principally to be followed by staff, parents, and other professionals in order to advertise the excellent work by staff, pupils, parents, and governors. Similarly, it will also contain information detailing special events in school. The aim of this is to run alongside more traditional methods like newsletters and letters; not to replace it. Users can also privately message each other when they don't want conversations to appear. William Cobbett Primary School will not enter into private discussions with others.

Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social network created by the makers of Facebook. William Cobbett Primary School will use their account to follow professionals in order to advertise the work by children for their adults to view. This social networking platform will run alongside the school's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Important information taken from newsletters and letters will also be shared to this account with emphasis that adults should read the newsletters for full details. Like Twitter, Instagram uses can use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in their post to categorise those posts and help them show more easily in search. Clicking or tapping on a 'hash tagged' word in any message shows you other posts that include that hashtag. Hashtags can be included anywhere in a posts comment and will only be used in correspondence with appropriate and relevant language and vocabulary. Users can also privately message each other when they don't want conversations to appear. William Cobbett Primary School will not enter into private discussions with others.

Who controls content for William Cobbett Primary School?

The uploading of content will be coordinated by Grace Brown (Year 4 GRT and Social Media Co-ordinator). William Cobbett Primary School is committed to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. When photographs are shared on the school's social media platforms, only images showing the backs of children's heads, side profiles, or photographs of children's work will be used. Staff are responsible for checking and adhering to photo permissions for all children in their class and for any photographs taken during year group visits, trips, or school events before images are uploaded. The school's Library social media account will continue to be managed by Caroline Clary (School Librarian).

Who can follow William Cobbett Primary School?

Our school Social Media account will be open to all followers however we reserve the right to block accounts deemed inappropriate or offensive to ourselves and/ or others. William Cobbett Primary School will encourage teaching staff, Governors, parents (of pupils), local schools and other educational establishments and organisations to be followers. No-one under the age of 18 will be allowed to follow the schools social networking accounts.

What is inappropriate content and referencing and how will it be dealt with?

We will not tolerate any referencing, mentions, or interactions on any Social Media sites that show the school in a negative light. William Cobbett Primary School deems any of the following as inappropriate:

Offensive language or remarks aimed at the school, its staff, parents, governors, or others affiliated with the school

Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed

Unsuitable images or content finding its way from another's account into the schools' feeds.

Images or text that infringe upon copyright or lead to legal implications

Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, governors, or others affiliated with the school.

Any inappropriate content will be deleted, and its users will be removed, blocked, and, depending on the nature of the comment, reported to Twitter/Facebook/Instagram. Furthermore, incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority. The school will contact the relevant persons when inappropriate behaviour arises and deal with it against the behaviour policy, parents and children will be spoken to/contacted in necessary.

Under no circumstances should a child's surname be published on the dedicated William Cobbett Primary School social media site. At no time should a member of staff or volunteer engage in conversations on these sites with a parent and/or child or any other person related to the school.

All staff, volunteers, governors, parents, and pupils at William Cobbett Primary School have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the school, and to treat colleagues and members of the school with professionalism and respect.

Any persons known to be posting inappropriate content about William Cobbett Primary School on any Facebook page will be deleted and its users will be removed, blocked, and, depending on the nature of the comment, reported to Facebook/Twitter/Instagram. Furthermore, incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority.

All employees must adhere to and apply the principles of the policy in all aspects of their work. Failure to do so may lead to action being taken under the disciplinary procedure.

Review of Policy

Due to the ever-changing nature of information and communication technologies it is best practice that this policy be reviewed annually.