Bewdley Primary School

Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

Date policy last reviewed: May 2025
Policy Next due for Review: May 2026

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Statement of intent

Bewdley Primary School understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as damage to the school's reputation. This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, with regard to the school and its reputation.

We ask that parents read this document and familiarise themselves with the content. By choosing to send your child to this school, you are agreeing to uphold the content of this Policy.

1. Legal framework

This document has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

This document operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedure Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Use of mobile phones Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Use of Images Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Dealing with persistent or vexatious complaints / harassment in schools Policy

2. Online and social media conduct

The school will expect parents to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting defamatory content about parents, pupils, the school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media
- Posting content containing confidential information regarding the school or any members of its community, e.g., a complaint outcome
- Contacting school employees through social media, including requesting to 'follow' or 'friend' them, or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff or the school in general
- Posting images of any staff members or pupils without their prior consent

The school retains the right to request that any damaging material is removed from social media websites.

If parents wish to raise a complaint, the school's Complaints Procedures Policy will be followed.

Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution. Parents will be instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

3. Online messaging

The school expects parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves, other parents and the school, but will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents or pupils
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Sending frequent messages to members of staff
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Bringing the school or its staff into disrepute

The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; however, the school does not condone parents sending frequent and unnecessary messages to staff. Parents will be expected to understand that staff should not be contacted outside of working hours. If parents wish to talk to staff, parents will arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to the school office or sending an email.

Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing. If necessary, the school will request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory content, occurs online.

The school's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent teacher association or governing board cause any issues through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

The headteacher will be permitted, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

The headteacher will be able to request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

4. Use of Images

Parents will be permitted to take photos at school events but should be mindful of others' privacy and seek permission from other parents prior to taking photos of them or their children. More information can be found within the school's Use of Images Policy.

5. Responsibility

Parents will be responsible for supporting the school by monitoring their own use of social media and online messaging. Parents will be expected to adhere to the Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents at all times.

Parents will be responsible for ensuring they support the school by monitoring their children's use of social media and online messaging. Parents will be expected to support their children in adhering to the Pupil Code of Conduct.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher will review this code of conduct on an annual basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents.

The next scheduled review date for this document is May 2026.