

Appendix C6 – Public Online Communications Policy Template

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how the school manages public online communications in order to reduce risk, promote safeguarding and online safety, celebrate success and communicate effectively with the wider school community.

Public online communications include the school website, newsletters, learning platforms, public messaging systems and official social media accounts.

This policy supports the Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring, Technical Security, Cyber Security and Data Security policies and reflects [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE), UKSIC guidance [Best Practices for Managing Images and Videos on School Websites](#), DfE statutory publication requirements [\(Maintained schools\)](#) and [\(Academies\)](#).

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff and governors
- All public online communications representing the school
- Official school accounts and platforms
- Personal accounts where they directly reference or represent the school
- School content published at any time, from any location or online platform

Policy Statement

The school will ensure that:

- Public online communications are accurate, lawful and appropriate
- Safeguarding considerations are prioritised
- Personal data is protected in line with the Data Security Policy
- Images and video are published only in line with consent procedures
- Copyright and intellectual property are respected
- Communications reflect professional standards
- Public references to the school are monitored appropriately

Roles and Responsibilities

- Governors provide strategic oversight and ensure compliance with statutory publication requirements.
- Senior leaders approve official accounts and oversee monitoring and moderation processes.
- Account administrators maintain secure access, monitor content regularly and ensure policy compliance.
- All staff must follow this policy, maintain professional standards and report concerns.

Creation of Public Online Accounts

- New public online accounts may only be created following approval by senior leadership.

- Proposals must define purpose, audience, responsible staff members and monitoring arrangements.
- At least two authorised staff members must have access to any official public account.

Monitoring and Moderation

The school will ensure that:

- Public communications are monitored regularly
- Comments are reviewed and moderated appropriately
- Harmful or inappropriate content is removed
- Serious incidents are recorded and escalated where necessary

Professional Standards

All public communications must:

- Be respectful and professional
- Avoid discriminatory, offensive or defamatory content
- Protect confidentiality
- Avoid internal grievance discussions
- Avoid disclosure of sensitive information

Use of Images and Media

The school will ensure that:

- Appropriate consent is obtained
- Images are appropriate and dignified
- Learners are not identified unnecessarily
- Images are removed where consent is withdrawn
- To reduce the risk of illegal manipulation of publicly available images of staff and learners, the school has procedures in place to control how those images are shared online. (n.b., UKSIC guidance [Best Practices for Managing Images and Videos on School Websites](#))

Personal Use and Association with the School

Staff may use personal social media accounts; however:

- Where referencing the school, appropriate disclaimers must be used
- Personal use must not impact professional standards nor school reputation
- Staff must not engage with current learners via personal accounts
- Excessive or inappropriate use during working hours may result in disciplinary action

Handling Complaints and Abuse

Where negative comments are made online:

- The school will respond proportionately
- Abusive content should be challenged and removed
- Parents'/carers' complaints should be directed to formal complaints procedures
- Serious matters may be escalated to senior leaders or external agencies

Training and Awareness

The school will ensure that:

- Staff responsible for public accounts receive guidance and training
- Governors understand oversight responsibilities
- The wider community is informed of expected standards

Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in response to legislative changes, national guidance or emerging risks.

Copyright of the SWGfL School Online Safety Policy Templates is held by SWGfL. Schools and other educational institutions are permitted free use of the templates. Any person or organisation wishing to use the document for other purposes should seek consent from SWGfL and acknowledge its use.

Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this template is accurate, as at the date of publication in April 2026. However, SWGfL cannot guarantee its accuracy, nor can it accept liability in respect of the use of the material whether in whole or in part and whether modified or not. Suitable legal/professional advice should be sought if any difficulty arises in respect of any aspect of this new legislation or generally to do with school conduct or discipline.

© SWGfL 2026