



Social Media Policy

Last Reviewed: August 2024
Date of next review: June 2025

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework, processes and procedures that facilitate Daffodil Preparatory School and best practice requirements and uphold the good reputation of the Organisation.

1. The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to communicate with various groups in new ways. Whilst recognising the benefits which using social media brings, this policy sets out the principles designed to ensure that all staff members use social media responsibly so that the confidentiality of students, staff and the reputation of Daffodil Preparatory School and its Centres is safeguarded. Staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate when using social media.

2. This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official, Daffodil Preparatory School matters. The policy applies to personal media platforms such as networking sites (e.g. Facebook, googlechat), blogs, microblogs such as Twitter, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access, online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia and content sharing sites such as YouTube. **However, this list is not exhaustive and new on-line platforms are to be considered automatically covered.**

3. This policy also applies to online message boards/forums and comments under news items and other articles.

4. The internet is fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media therefore the principles set out in this policy must be followed closely, irrespective of the medium or platform.

Purpose of policy and guidance

5. To minimise the reputational, legal and governance risks to Daffodil Preparatory School and its employees, arising from use of social media by staff in both personal and professional capacities.

6. To enable the safe use of social media for the purposes of communication and engagement.

7. To ensure a consistent approach is applied across the Daffodil Preparatory School and its Centres.

8. To identify responsibilities of Daffodil Preparatory School and its employees in line with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Data Protection
- Professional Standards Legal implications

9. Staff should be aware that there are a number of legal implications associated with the inappropriate use of social media. Liability can arise under the laws of:

- Defamation
- Copyright
- Discrimination
- Contract
- Human Rights
- Protection from harassment
- Criminal Justice
- Data Protection

10. For purposes of this policy the term 'public' is used to refer to those outside of the immediate Daffodil Preparatory School (Employees, contractors and students) and includes (but not exclusively) parents/carers and ex-pupils.

11. It is recognised that social networking has the potential to play an important part in many aspects of life, including teaching and learning, marketing and recruitment, external communications and continuing professional development. This policy therefore encourages the responsible and professional use of the Internet and social media to support educational delivery and professional development.

12. The Internet provides an increasing range of social media tools that allow users to interact with each other. Whilst recognising the important benefits of these media for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets

out the principles that Daffodil Preparatory School staff, governors and contractors are required to follow when using social media.

13. It is essential that pupils/students, parents and the public at large have confidence in Daffodil Preparatory School's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of students and staff members and the reputation of Daffodil Preparatory School and its Centres is safeguarded. **In this context, staff members must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.**

14. The policy also identifies the need for Daffodil Preparatory School, and its Centres, to offer protection for employees who may be harassed or victimised by other members of the learning community due to their professional relationship with Daffodil Preparatory School.

15. It provides information and guidance for both professional and personal use and outlines the risks to users and schools, as well as the potential consequences of misuse of the internet and social media.

16. Where staff have concerns about e-safety, these should be raised with the Head as soon as possible. Advice can also be sought from professional associations and trade unions.

17. This policy equally applies to all employees including teacher trainees, apprentices and any other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of Daffodil Preparatory School.

18. Each Centre will have a designated Safeguarding Lead and a Data Protection Lead. The DSL for and DPL are named, along with information about how to contact them, on the Daffodil Preparatory School Website.

19. Any misuse of social media must be reported promptly to the Head, whether carried out by pupils, parents/guardians or staff members.

20. All users must be aware that as soon as a post is made online, it is no longer within the private sphere or in the control of the original poster.

21. If an employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed, further action may be taken to assist with the prosecution of the offenders.

22. In all communications from members of staff/employees of Daffodil Preparatory School, staff should:

- a) be conscious at all times of the need to keep personal and professional lives separate. Staff should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work and personal interests.
- b) not engage in activities involving social media which may bring Daffodil Preparatory School into disrepute.
- c) not represent their personal views as those of Daffodil Preparatory School on any social medium.
- d) not discuss personal information about students, staff and any other professionals that they interact with as part of their job, on social media.
- e) follow safeguarding principles
- f) be open, honest, ethical and professional;
- g) use jargon-free, plain English in professional communication;
- h) be actioned within an agreed time frame;
- i) use the method of communication that is most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience;
- j) be cost effective.

Monitoring

23. All Daffodil Preparatory School ICT systems may be monitored in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy, so personal privacy cannot be assumed when using Daffodil Preparatory School hardware.

24. Centres can monitor the usage of its own internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users (staff, contractors and pupils) when justifiable concerns have been raised re: electronic communication. This will be in line with Daffodil Preparatory School's investigation procedures.

25. Daffodil Preparatory School respects the privacy of its employees. However, postings made on a personal account may attain a wide readership and will therefore be considered public rather than private. Publicly accessible postings may be investigated if there is a suspected breach of this or related policies.

26. When a public post is reported concerning non-employee members of the school community, this will be investigated and responded to by Daffodil Preparatory School. Further action may be taken to assist with the prosecution of the offenders.

27. Staff members are strongly encouraged not to identify themselves as staff members of Daffodil Preparatory School in their personal social media platforms. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with Daffodil Preparatory School and its Centres, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members. This does not include professional networking sites.

28. Staff should not have contact through any social medium with any student from Daffodil Preparatory School or any other school. Staff are advised not to communicate on social media platforms with ex-students except via professional networking sites for professional reasons.

29. Staff should decline 'friend requests' from students they receive in their personal social media accounts.

30. Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues and other parties must not be discussed on their personal social media platforms.

31. Photographs, videos or any of images of pupils or students must not be published on personal social media platforms without prior permission of parents/carers and the Daffodil Preparatory School. Permission should be gained through existing Centre procedures.

32. Daffodil Preparatory School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media unless pre-approved by the headteacher.

33. Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships.

34. Staff are strongly advised to ensure that they set up and regularly review the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information.

35. Staff should also select carefully their social media profile picture as it is an extension to their professional image online.

36. Social media should not be used for work related communication. Communication should be through Daffodil Preparatory School email or contact details held by the Daffodil Preparatory School.

37. Any misuse or abuse of social media must be reported to the Head, especially when concerning a pupil, parent/guardian or employee. Where a member of staff is a parent/guardian as well as an employee of Daffodil Preparatory School.

38. In cases where staff are also parents connected to the school, they are advised to use professional judgment (in reference to child protection and safeguarding policies) when communicating with children or young people also connected to the school community.

39. Staff should only accept friend requests/communicate (when there is a genuine need) with others linked to the Daffodil Preparatory School community.

40. This relationship should stand up to scrutiny from a professional perspective and should be appropriate. If a concern of safeguarding arises, this should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead in accordance with school policy.

41. Daffodil Preparatory School recognises the risks associated with use of the Internet and social media and regulates their use to ensure this does not damage the Daffodil Preparatory School, its staff and the people it serves.

Principal amongst these risks are:

- access to inappropriate material;
- civil or criminal action relating to breaches of legislation;
- cyber bullying by pupils/students;
- damage to the reputation of Daffodil Preparatory School;
- disclosure of confidential information;
- inappropriate behaviour, criticism and complaints from external sources;
- loss or theft of personal data;
- offending behaviour toward staff members by other staff or pupils/students;
- other misuse by staff including inappropriate personal use;
- social engineering attacks - i.e. the act of manipulating people into disclosing confidential material or carrying out certain actions;
- staff members openly identifying themselves as Daffodil Preparatory School personnel and making disparaging remarks about the school and/or its policies, about other staff members, pupils or other people associated with Daffodil Preparatory School.
- damage to professional reputations with current and future employers.
- virus or other malware (malicious software) infection from infected sites.

42. Communication with pupils/students will take place face-to-face or via a staff member's school email address only

43. A staff member will not communicate with a pupil/student via their personal mobile phone or using personal email addresses. All communication with pupils will be via school email

44. The School has many lines of communication to maintain positive working relationships with parents/carers. These may include: letters, telephone calls, emails, face-to-face meetings, the website, tweets, Facebook, a half termly publication, progress reports and parents' evenings. Effective communications not only deliver the specific information required, but also enable schools to demonstrate values and ethos. Communication with parents/carers should always reinforce parental support and engagement.

45. Communications will seek to establish open and positive relationships with parents, whilst always ensuring that these relationships are professional. To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner using formal mediums of communication i.e. telephone, email, letter.

46. Staff will not communicate with parents/carers or students via any form of networking site, personal mobile or email. Where there is a need to communicate directly with parents/carers (i.e. on school trips) staff will have access to school provided equipment i.e. mobile phones.

47. Schools may use certain sites but this is carefully regulated and not "owned" by individual members of staff. There is a designated social media and communications manager who will be trained to use these facilities on the websites.

Using social media on behalf of Daffodil Preparatory School.

48. Authorised staff should only use official social media school sites for communicating with students, to enable students to communicate with one another or for professional school marketing and recruitment.

49. Staff should not use personal social media accounts for official school business. Staff must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

50. On school trips staff MUST use a school mobile phone, staff should never give out their personal number to parents, carers or pupils.
51. Personal devices should not be used to access school emails or servers unless with prior agreement.
52. School based Staff will be made aware of the implications of using personal devices and will be advised that accessing school communications on personal devices is not an expectation or a condition of employment at the school.
53. Daffodil Preparatory School will provide access to suitable hardware and software where required.
54. Specific, named administrators will be responsible for maintaining the content of school websites in line with Daffodil Preparatory School Communication Policy. There will be regular communication between the Hub Manager and Centre Managers to identify what content is appropriate for posting on the Daffodil Preparatory School platforms.
55. Permissions must be sought for images of children/young people to be used in school produced materials, clear reference to online usage needs to be made when permissions are requested.
56. Staff must give permission for their images to be used in relation to school produced materials accessible by members of the public (online or in print), whether controlled by the school or not. Photographs must be checked carefully to ensure that children who are on the restricted list are never shown on the websites.
57. Cyberbullying is making use of information and communications technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately undermine, humiliate or otherwise cause distress to the person on the receiving end. Staff must not use social media and the internet to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations (including Daffodil Preparatory School).
58. Cyber Bullying and Cyber Harassment, like other forms of bullying and harassment, imply a relationship where an individual has some influence or advantage that is used improperly over another person or persons, where the victim is subjected to a disadvantage or detriment, and where the behaviour is unwarranted and unwelcome to the victim. However, in this case the technological environment has meant that the acts of bullying and harassment now include the use of information and communications technology including email and social networking.
59. It should be noted that a person does not need to directly experience this form of victimisation in order for it to be classed as cyber bullying/harassment. The fact that a person is unaware that offensive or derogatory comments about them have been placed on websites still fits the criteria of cyber bullying/harassment.
60. Staff should not personally engage with cyberbullying incidents and should immediately report incidents to their Centre Manager, who will report the matter to the Head of Compliance.
61. If a member of Staff is the victim (receives any threats, abuse or harassment from members of the public through their use of social media), they should keep any records of the abuse and if appropriate, screen prints of messages or webpages with time, date and address of the site. Staff must report such incidents using the school's procedures. Support is also available through confidential counselling support.
62. Daffodil Preparatory School will consider it a potential disciplinary matter if users utilise any information and communications technology, including email and social networking sites, in such a way as to bully/harass others in Daffodil Preparatory School or in partner organisations, or pupils/students or parents, whether this takes place during or outside of work.
63. Staff members and pupils need to be aware that no matter what the privacy settings on their social media/networking site, inappropriate/derogatory information about a colleague in Daffodil Preparatory School or one of its Centres, or partner organisations, other pupils or parents, can find its way into the public domain even when not intended.

64. If a member of staff is the perpetrator of the incident/s the situation will then be investigated and if appropriate, the Disciplinary or Capability Procedure will be followed.

65. If a pupil is the perpetrator of the incident/s the situation will be initially investigated in line with Daffodil Preparatory School behaviour and pupil disciplinary policy. Where appropriate the police will be consulted.

66. Where a potential criminal offence has been identified, and reported to the police, Daffodil Preparatory School will ensure that any internal investigation does not interfere with police enquires. Staff who are victims of cyber-bullying or harassment will be offered support by their line manager and where suitable, occupational health.

67. The school owes a duty of care to employees to take reasonable steps to provide a safe working environment free from bullying and harassment.

68. For this reason, it is essential that Senior Leaders take appropriate steps to deal with any incident where it is alleged that a staff member has subjected others to abusive or personally offensive emails, phone calls or content on social networking sites, or by any other means.

69. If a Senior Leader is made aware of such an allegation, the Senior Leadership Team should deal with it in the same way as any other incident of bullying or harassment in line with Daffodil Preparatory School policies, by investigating the allegations promptly and appropriately and providing the victim with appropriate support to demonstrate that the matter is being dealt with seriously.

70. Senior Leaders should encourage staff to preserve all evidence by not deleting emails. In addition, logging phone calls and taking screen-prints of websites would all help towards supporting an investigation. If the incident involves illegal content or contains threats of a physical or sexual nature, the Senior Leadership team should consider advising the employee that they should inform the police.

71. In the event that such evidence contains indecent images of children, it is an offence to save, send, or alter an image or to show it to anyone else. Therefore, the evidence must be placed in a secure location such as a locked cupboard where others will not be able to see it. In these circumstances the Police must be contacted immediately for advice.