

## Social media

### Livingstone Primary School's SM presence

Livingstone Primary School works on the principle that if we don't manage our social media reputation, someone else will.

Online Reputation Management (ORM) is about understanding and managing our digital footprint (everything that can be seen or read about the school online). Few parents will apply for a school place without first 'googling' the school, and the Ofsted pre-inspection check includes monitoring what is being said online (Mumsnet is a favourite).

Negative coverage almost always causes some level of disruption. Up to half of all cases dealt with by the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH: [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)) involve schools' (and staff members') online reputation.

Accordingly, we manage and monitor our social media footprint carefully to know what is being said about the school and to respond to criticism and praise in a fair, responsible manner.

Laura Donohue (school administrator) is responsible for managing our Instagram social media account. She follows the guidance in the LGfL / Safer Internet Centre online-reputation management document [here](#).

On our school social media page, we intend to post updates of events happening in school and reminders about things parents need to know about within school. For example, Global Grooves workshops, Macmillan Coffee Mornings, updates from educational visits etc. These posts will be made as and when relevant.

Children in the post, if they are identifiable from the image will have permission given by parents to feature on a social media page. Otherwise their image will not be used. As much as possible, for ease of use, we will try to use images where children are not identifiable – eg. Silhouetted, at a distance etc. If children are identifiable, their names will not be attached to the post. These images should be taken with school devices eg school iPads. The only exception to this is when on an educational visit and the images need to be sent back to school within the school day. In this case an image can be taken on a mobile and sent back to school for posting. In order to safeguard staff, at the end of the day the image must be deleted from the device and another member of staff witness that this has been done.

All posts will have the ability to comment turned off so that concerns and complaints can be dealt with via the appropriate, official channels.

## Staff, pupils' and parents' SM presence

Social media (including here all apps, sites and games that allow sharing and interaction between users) is a fact of modern life, and as a school, we accept that many parents, staff and pupils will use it. However, as stated in the acceptable use policies which all members of the school community sign, we expect everybody to behave in a positive manner, engaging respectfully with the school and each other on social media, in the same way as they would face to face.

This positive behaviour can be summarised as not making any posts which are or could be construed as bullying, aggressive, rude, insulting, illegal or otherwise inappropriate, or which might bring the school or (particularly for staff) teaching profession into disrepute. This applies both to public pages and to private posts, e.g. parent chats, pages or groups.

If parents have a concern about the school, we would urge them to contact us directly and in private to resolve the matter. If an issue cannot be resolved in this way, the school complaints procedure found on our school website should be followed. Sharing complaints on social media is unlikely to help resolve the matter, but can cause upset to staff, pupils and parents, also undermining staff morale and the reputation of the school (which is important for the pupils we serve).

Many social media platforms have a minimum age of 13 (note that WhatsApp is 16+), but the school regularly deals with issues arising on social media with pupils/students under the age of 13. We ask parents to respect age ratings on social media platforms wherever possible and not encourage or condone underage use. It is worth noting that Online Harms regulation is likely to require more stringent age verification measures over the coming years.

However, the school has to strike a difficult balance of not encouraging underage use at the same time as needing to acknowledge reality in order to best help our pupils/students to avoid or cope with issues if they arise. Online safety lessons will look at social media and other online behaviour, how to be a good friend online and how to report bullying, misuse, intimidation or abuse. However, children will often learn most from the models of behaviour they see and experience, which will often be from adults.

Parents can best support this by talking to their children about the apps, sites and games they use (you don't need to know them – ask your child to explain it to you), with whom, for how long, and when (late at night / in bedrooms is not helpful for a good night's sleep and productive teaching and learning at school the next day). You may wish to use the [Digital Family Agreement](#) with example statements to help families agree on shared expectations around time spent on devices, and ground rules like no phones at the table or in the bedroom at night-time, and refer to the [Top Tips for Parents](#) poster along with tips around parental controls, settings, apps and games, and introduce the [Children's Commission Digital 5 A Day](#) – all available at [parentsafe.lgfl.net](https://parentsafe.lgfl.net).

The school has an official Instagram account (managed by Laura Donohue) and will respond to general enquiries about the school, but asks parents/carers not to use these channels to communicate about their children.

Email is the official electronic communication channel between parents and the school, and between staff and pupils. For communication between class teachers and parents, Seesaw can be used as well as email via the school email address.

Staff are not allowed to be 'friends' with a pupil (Exceptions may be made, e.g. for pre-existing family links, but these must be approved by the Headteacher, and should be declared upon entry of the pupil or staff member to the school). Staff are discouraged from being 'friend' with a parent unless they have known them before the professional relationship started. Staff are not allowed to communicate via social media with parents and children and are not allowed to 'follow' pages belonging to pupils.

Staff are reminded that they are obliged not to bring the school or profession into disrepute and the easiest way to avoid this is to have the strictest privacy settings and avoid inappropriate sharing and oversharing online. They should never discuss the school or its stakeholders on social media and be careful that their personal opinions might not be attributed to the school or local authority, bringing the school into disrepute.

The serious consequences of inappropriate behaviour on social media are underlined by the fact that during the last 5 years, there have been 263 Prohibition Orders issued by the Teacher Regulation Agency to teaching staff that involved misuse of social media/technology.

All members of the school community are reminded that particularly in the context of social media, it is important to comply with the school policy on digital images and permission is sought before uploading photographs, videos or any other information about other people.

The statements of the Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) which all members of the school community have signed are also relevant to social media activity, as is the school's Data Protection Policy.

## Social media incidents

Breaches of this policy and of school AUPs (Acceptable Use Policies) will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or code of conduct (for staff).

Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the school community, Rebecca Willard will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.

Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the school may report it to the platform where it is hosted, and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline, POSH (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for support or help to accelerate this process. The police or other authorities may be involved where a post is potentially illegal or dangerous.

## Extremism

The school has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty. Staff will not support or promote extremist organisations, messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the school, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature. We ask for parents' support in this also, especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be widespread on certain platforms.

## Further questions

If parents have further questions, they can contact Rebecca Willard at the school; the NSPCC has a parent online safety helpline which can help with general issues that are not school specific.

Staff should speak to Rebecca Willard in the first instance, who may then call on the expertise of local authority advisers, LGfL DigiSafe or Professionals' Online-Safety Helpline (from UK SIC).



Simon Wilde  
Vice-chair of Governors  
25<sup>th</sup> September 2023