



# Redwood Secondary School

*"Where every person matters"*

## **Interim Social Media Policy**

## **Redwood social media guidelines for staff and volunteers**

### **Statement of intent**

At Redwood Secondary School, the safety of the students and staff is paramount and, with that in mind, this policy has been created in order to safeguard everyone.

### **1. Introduction**

Social media is a fact of life for most of us today, especially young people. Research shows that among 16-to-25-year olds in the UK, as many as 99% use social media every day. Children aged 12 and under are below the age limit for opening a social media account, but despite this research has found that 75% of them have one.

Redwood Secondary School has active social media channels. On a typical day there will be a number of individuals and organisations sharing details of their work with us on social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Tik Tok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube (list not exhaustive). We believe that, used positively, this can play an important part in enhancing our impact and developing relationships with the local, regional and national communities.

Many of Redwood staff and networks are active on social media and use this as a way to promote and discuss our work. However, it is well documented that the advance of social media has had negative side effects. These can include stress and addiction, sedentary behaviour and opportunities for bullying and harassment. Used in the wrong way, information inappropriately shared on social media can pose a threat to young people's safety.

Research by the NSPCC in 2017 found that four out of five children feel social media companies aren't doing enough to protect them. It is therefore vital that organisations like Redwood take a proactive approach to ensure that our use of social media does not put young people at risk of harm.

### **2. Purpose**

These guidelines are intended to help ensure that social media and other forms of electronic communication are being used positively at Redwood, with precautions taken to ensure that it does not inadvertently put young people's safety or wellbeing at risk.

They apply to all employees, volunteers, ambassadors and self-employed contractors who work for or with the Redwood Secondary School, and who post on social media about Redwood's work, whether from an individual social media account or through one of Redwood's accounts.

This document sits alongside Redwood's safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures and guidelines, which is required reading for all staff. You can find a copy of Redwood's safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures and guidelines under the safeguarding section on the website.

### **3. Access to Redwood's Social Media accounts**

Redwood Secondary School has active accounts on several social media platforms. The communications team is responsible for managing these accounts and posting content. Occasionally, other members of Redwood staff may be given access to the accounts on a temporary basis to share content if a member communications team is unable to post. In these instances, temporary login details will be shared with a limited number of individuals.

Where possible content should be planned and scheduled in advance so that it can be signed off by a member of the communications team ahead of publication.

### **4. Redwood social media principles**

Across all of our social media channels, we commit to ensuring that we:

- Are positive and encouraging in tone
- Take an inclusive approach which recognises and celebrates diversity
- Protect the privacy and safety of young people
- Adhere to the Redwood's safeguarding policies.
- Live up to Redwood's mission statement

## 5. Individual accounts

Redwood Secondary School recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. Employees must be aware that inappropriate activity on social media can be potentially damaging to the school if they are recognised as being a school employee.

Staff must not 'friend', 'follow', or message students (past or present) on Social Media.

Any communications that employees make in a personal capacity through social media must therefore adhere to the principles as set out in this policy.

Employees are reminded to ensure their personal privacy settings are appropriate e.g. that your postings are only visible to those people who you have designated as "friends". Please refer to the social media provider's guidance on how to do this, as it will differ across applications.

Staff must remain mindful of their profile pictures, maintaining professionalism and dignity whilst upholding the standards required by the organisation.

Whilst in work, school employees are **not allowed** access to social media websites for personal use from the school's computers/devices or using their own equipment, this is in accordance with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy which is signed annually (start of Academic Year) by all staff.

## 6. Engaging with young people online

Engagement with young people, through Redwood's social media channels, online must adhere to Redwood's safeguarding policy and social media principles. Any engagement with individual young people through social media or other forms of electronic communication should be in a public forum and reactive (i.e. conversation initiated by a young person). Staff must not communicate with students via their own social media platforms. If any 'friend requests', or 'follows' are initiated from students then the safeguarding team must be alerted.

Children aged 12 and under are below the age limit for opening a social media account. We should therefore not engage with any posts from accounts where a young person is thought to be younger than 13.

Young people are, however, able to follow and befriend Redwood's social media accounts.

**Commenting, liking and sharing** - Where a young person has posted about their involvement with the work of Redwood from their personal account, it is acceptable to comment, like or share the post, through Redwood's official social media channels, in a manner in keeping with Redwood's values and social media principles. If in any doubt, speak to the communications team.

**Private conversations** - Many social media platforms include the functionality for private messaging – posts which can only be viewed by the selected individual(s) they are sent to.

As a representative of Redwood you should not be involved in any private conversations with any of the young people you come into contact with through your work with the school. This includes through other forms of electronic media.

If you do receive any private correspondence from young people, these must be shared in full with the safeguarding lead. This is both for your safety and the safety of the young people.

## **7. Images**

In line with the wider Redwood Secondary safeguarding policy, written permission must be obtained ahead of any photography or videography involving young people.

In line with Redwood's social media principles, images and video shared should be celebratory, positive and encouraging in tone. They must not compromise the safety or integrity of an individual or put them at risk of bullying.

## **8. Monitoring social media activity**

The communications team has responsibility for monitoring social media mentions of Redwood and its work and escalating any safeguarding concerns and issues.

It is your responsibility to monitor responses and interactions with anything you post in relation to your work with Redwood. Where a post you have shared attracts any negative comments which could cause upset to the young people involved, you should report this to the communications team.

## **9. Celebrating student's achievements**

If any staff member would like to celebrate / share the achievement(s) of a student or group they must send any documentation and images to the communications team who will then, if the content adheres to Redwood's social media principles, will be posted.

## **10. Contact**

Where issues arise and further clarification is needed, contact the communications team or safeguarding lead

## **10. Further information**

Recommended resources and contacts for further information about safe use of social media:

- The UK Safer Internet Centre provides free resources for young people, parents, carers, teachers and other professionals: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>
- [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). This is the Government body dedicated to eradicating abuse of children. Concerns about inappropriate contacts between a child and an adult, including online, can be reported directly to CEOP.
- Childline (0800 1111 or [www.Childline.org.uk](http://www.Childline.org.uk)) is an NSPCC support service where children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, either over the phone or online using an instant messenger service.

- The NSPCC and O2 have a free online safety hotline for any parents with questions about parental controls or concerns about their child's use of social media: 0808 800 5002.

## Redwood Communications Team

Staff Name:	Role:
Clare John	Head Teacher
Jo Connor	Deputy Head Teacher
Nancy Wright	Business Manager
Sinead Walsh	Assistant Head Teacher / Safeguarding Lead
David Butterworth	Head of PE, Health and Wellbeing
Mark Dale	Head of LikeSkills
Justin Henderson	Extended School Coordinator