Social Media Policy

This is a mandatory policy for all Vine schools that has been noted and implemented with no amendments by this school.

Policy Reference:	1007
Approved by Vine Schools Trust on:	Spring 22
Adopted by this school on:	Spring 22
Next review:	Spring 24

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Vision & Values

V	**V**aluing every person
I	**I**nspiring great teaching
N	**N**urturing academic excellence and **Christian Character**
E	**E**xcelling, unlocking great potential

Excellent Education

Vine

Outward Facing

Christian Character
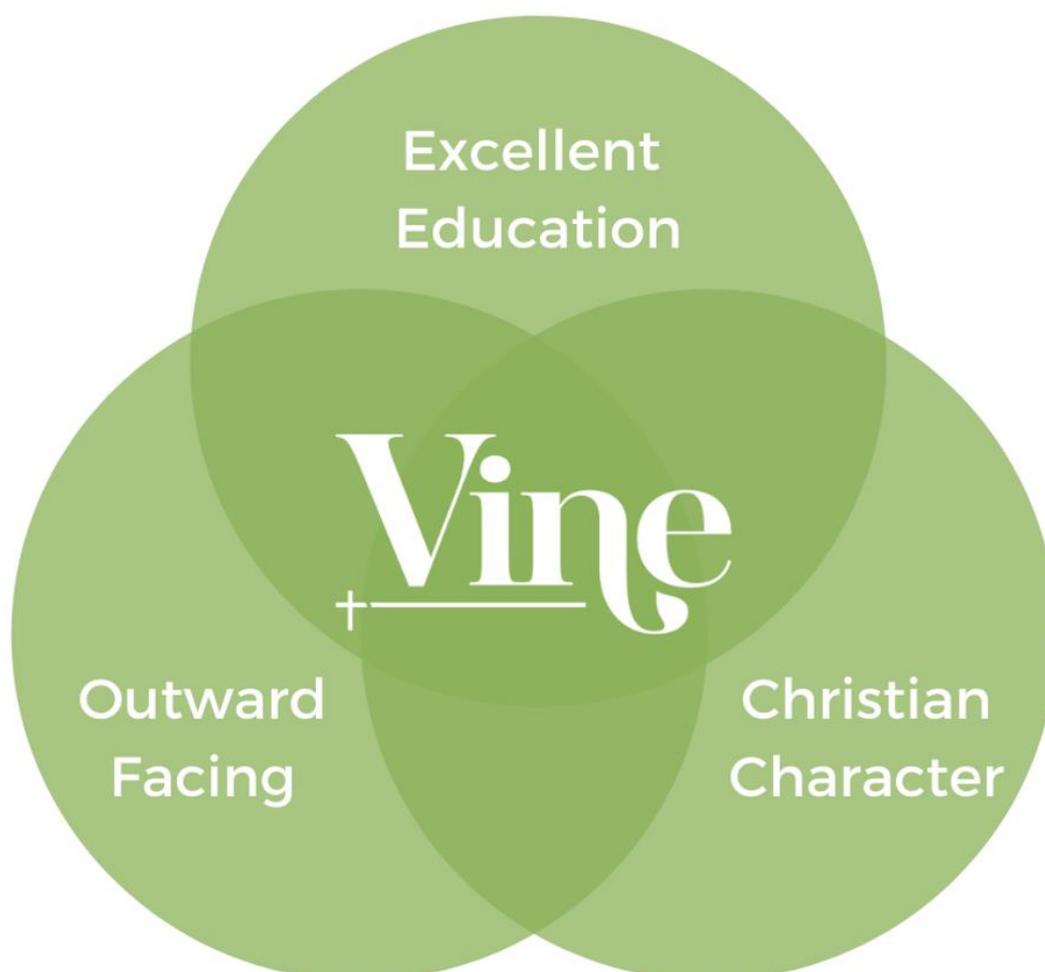
Changes to previous edition
Minor formatting changes
Section 7 – change of terminology and definition from 'sexting' to 'sharing nude and semi-nude images'

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1. Introduction

This policy is to ensure best practice for the use of Social Media for all staff, members of governance boards; parents and guardians, and children.

It is natural to want to share proud moments of learning in school through images/film on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Social media has also become a vehicle through which to vent when having a problem, but the internet is not always a safe or private place, and 'oversharing' could potentially put a child and others at risk.

This policy is aimed at keeping everyone and especially children safe.

Appendices A & B provide specific guidance for all staff on the use of social media.

2. Requirements for the use of social media

- The Vine Schools Trust has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Social Media Policy and procedures of all the schools.
- The Vine Schools Trust has responsibility for ensuring that the Social Media Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- It is the school's responsibility for ensuring that any complaints relating to the policy are handled using the school's complaint procedures at all its stages.
- The headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Social Media Policy and procedures.
- Staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Social Media Policy and teachers and support staff also have responsibility for ensuring children do so. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom.
  There is an expectation that members of governance boards, parents and carers will work with the Vine Schools Trust policy and that schools will encourage parents and carers to promote safe social media behaviour in the home.
- Each school will provide support and information to encourage and assist parents and carers in their responsibility for e-safety.

3. For staff, requirements include:

- Accepting no friend requests from current pupils, or ex-pupils under the age of 13.
- Notifying parents/carers if a child sends a friend request.
- Ensure consent has been completed and signed for all children before any photos or videos are included in any that are posted on social media.
- Refrain from discussing anything to do with school, pupils or other staff members, or posting photos of school events without prior consent.
- Only posting content that they would be happy to be attributed to them as a teaching professional, an employee of the school staff/Vine Schools Trust and that will bring neither into disrepute.
- Refrain from identifying themselves as being associated with the school on private social media accounts.
- Using appropriate privacy settings on all social media accounts.
- Refrain from using social media on school devices, or on personal devices while on the school premises.
- Members of staff must not post content that could be linked in any way to terrorism and/or extremism.

4. Parents/carers should be asked:

- To ensure the e-safety of their own children, all children at the school and the staff as a priority.
- Raise queries, concerns and complaints directly with the school through the usual procedures rather than posting them on social media – whether on their own pages, in closed groups or on the school's pages
- Post no photos, videos or comments that include other children at the school.
- Refrain from accessing social media on their own devices while on school premises.
- Accessing no social media sites whilst in school or on school visits.
- Refrain fromposting anything malicious about the school or any member of the school community.
- Parents/carers should not post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this policy.

5. Children are to be taught and expected to:

- Refrain from joining social networking sites if they are below the permitted age (13 for most sites including Facebook and Instagram).
- Tell their parents/carers if they are using the sites, and when they are online.
- Be aware of how to report abuse and inappropriate content.
- Refrain from accessing social media on school devices, or on their own devices while at school.
- Refrain from making inappropriate comments (including in private messages) about the school, it's staff or other children.
- Children must not attempt to "friend" or otherwise contact members of staff through social media. If attempts to contact members of staff through social media are made, they will be reported to the headteacher.

6. Cyberbullying

- Cyber bullying is taken very seriously by the Vine Schools Trust schools.
- Incidents of cyber bullying that occur during the school day will be dealt with in line with the schools' behaviour policy.
- Incidents of cyber bullying that occur outside of the school day should be reported to/by parents/carers. Families should then decide whether to contact the networking site to report the issue, CEOP and/or the Police.
- The school will not usually investigate cyber bullying issues that have taken place outside of school. However, they will work with children to repair relationships and to prevent further cyber bullying.
- Staff members should never respond or retaliate to cyber bullying incidents. Incidents should instead be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and, as necessary, by them to the police.
- Evidence from the incident should be saved, including screen prints of messages or web pages, and the time and date of the incident.
- If the perpetrator is a parent/carer he/she will be invited into school to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and will be asked to remove the offensive content.
- If the perpetrator refuses to comply, it is up to the school to decide what to do next. This could include contacting the internet service provider in question through their reporting mechanisms, if the offensive content breaches their terms and conditions.
- If the issue is of a safeguarding nature it should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will take the appropriate action under the Child Protection Policy.
- If the material is threatening, abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitutes a hate crime, the school leadership should consider contacting the Police.
- Schools should conduct regular education and discussion about e-safety as part of computing and P.S.H.E in order to prevent cyberbullying

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7. Sharing nude or semi-nude images (previously known as 'sexting') and child pornography

Definition / language
- The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the UK Council for Internet Safety have published guidance to support education settings in responding to incidents involving the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and safeguarding children and young people.
- This advice uses the term 'sharing nudes and semi-nudes' to mean the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18 online. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums. The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents.
- The motivations for taking and sharing nude and semi-nude images, videos and live streams are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:
  -children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online
  -images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame
  -the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes can happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and closed social media accounts. They may include more than one child or young person.
- Many professionals may refer to 'nudes and semi-nudes' as:
  -youth produced sexual imagery or 'youth involved' sexual imagery
  - indecent imagery. This is the legal term used to define nude or semi-nude images and videos of children and   young people under the age of 18.
  -'sexting'. Many adults may use this term, however some young people interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know' rather than sharing images
  -image-based sexual abuse. This term may be used when referring to the non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes
  -terms such as 'revenge porn' and 'upskirting' are also used to refer to specific incidents of nudes and semi-nudes being shared. However, these terms are more often used in the context of adult-to-adult non-consensual image sharing offences outlined in s.33-35 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 and s.67A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

- Vine Schools Trust takes the issue of sharing nude/semi-nude images very seriously. The DSL in the school will report any such incidents, including the possession and distribution of child pornography to the child's parents/carers and the Essex Children's Social Care (Family Operations Hub) who will involve the Police.
- If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.
- The school will always try to establish who has possessed or distributed an indecent image, so they are able to provide the Police with accurate information.
- The school will use the DfE's current advice Searching, Screening and Confiscation to search phones if we believe they may contain pornographic material.

8. Related Policies
This policy will be followed in conjunction with:
- Child Protection Policy:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Vine Schools Trust Website Policy
Please note the latest edition will always apply.

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9. Appendix A: Notes for staff use of social Media

Who will look after your accounts?

The social media manager needs
- the technical ability to manage the process,
- the communication skills to properly engage with others where needed
- time to regularly monitor what is happening online.

In most VST primary schools this is likely to be someone in the SLT or administration team.

When and how often should you post updates?
This varies, Facebook can be updated once a day or once a week, depending on the size of the school and the amount of information you have to share.
Twitter ideally requires daily updates else posts will be lost among the large volume of tweets that many people see every day.
Instagram can be updated once a day, but around two to three times a week may better suit depending how much imagery you have available. Tools such as Buffer let you schedule social media updates in advance, so you can post them at the best time for people to read them. For parents, the times around their daily drop-offs and pick-ups work well. You can schedule Twitter and Facebook posts without using a third-party scheduler, but without using tools like Buffer you can only post to Instagram directly.

What should you share?
Aim to post a mix of useful information, like reminders for parents about upcoming events and trips etc. and good news about the school. Social media platforms have become increasingly photo and video friendly over time, and can obviously be updated from anywhere, so it might be worth investing in a school smartphone that can be taken out and about. *Consider training a couple of members of staff on using it to take pictures or videos and upload images.* Ensure you have consent forms completed for any class photos well in advance.

How can you monitor what is being said about you?
Social media sites need monitoring at least daily, so that you can help with enquiries and identify any potential areas of unhappiness. You can delete posts on your social media and you are able to report or block anything harmful. Instagram has the functionality to have comments switched off, which we recommend for all Vine schools.

How should you respond to comments?
Thank people for positive comments and make sure to record them for potential use in the school's future marketing messages.
Answer neutral questions as accurately as possible – if you are not sure what to say, ask internally, but always try to respond. If any negative comments are posted, you must address the issue within 24 hours. *If the post is abusive, illegal or inappropriate, remove it from your page and report it to the social media platform straight away*. If it is a genuine complaint, try to engage with the individual off-platform as soon as possible. A face-to-face meeting or a telephone conversation may be required. As part of the discussion, ask them to remove their post.

How will you safeguard everyone involved?
You need to make sure that staff and students are protected at all times, and this means following school policies on identifying specific students and reminding parents not to 'tag' pictures with student names or use abusive language. Staff need to be aware of policies around contacting students on social media and ensure that all posts be reviewed by senior management on a regular basis.

10. Appendix B: Positive post pointers

Parents and carers like to be kept in the loop. By regularly sharing photos and videos of projects, activities and upcoming events, parents and carers are given a glimpse into what the children get up to daily.
'School trip to XX was a roaring success despite the rainy weather – Year 6 loved every second!'
'We cannot wait to welcome you all to the Summer Fete on Saturday 20th July'

Safeguarding measures must be in place to ensure you have safe photography that keeps everyone happy.

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