



# Long Lawford Primary School

Love, Learn, Persevere and Succeed

## Parental Use of Social Networking and Internet Sites

<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Claire Stringer</b>
	<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Faye Padfield</b>
<b>Adopted by Governors</b>	<b>May 2024</b>	
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	<b>January 2024</b>	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	<b>January 2027</b>	

## OVERVIEW

Social networking sites and messaging apps such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and WhatsApp are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites and apps can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about the school, its pupils and / or parents and its staff. This document sets out our school's approach to parental use of such sites and apps and sets out the procedures the school will follow and action that may be taken when the school considers that a parent(s) has used such facilities inappropriately.

When this policy has referred to "parent", it also includes carers; relatives; or anyone associated with the school.

## OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites and messaging apps to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents.
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites and messaging apps.
- Safeguard the reputation of the school from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites and messaging apps.
- Clarify what the school considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites and messaging apps by parents.
- Set out the procedures the school will follow where it considers parents have inappropriately or unlawfully used social networking sites and / or messaging apps to the detriment of the school, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the school.
- Set out the action the school will consider taking if parents make inappropriate use of social networking sites and messaging apps.

## APPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND MESSAGING APPS BY PARENTS

Social networking sites and messaging apps have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents to access information about the school. In addition, the school recognises that many parents and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss / share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites or messaging apps about the school, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the school:

- Is the social networking site or messaging app the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give this feedback or express these views?
- Would private and confidential discussions with the school be more appropriate? For example, if there are serious allegations being made / concerns being raised. Social media, internet sites or messaging apps should not be used to name individuals and make abusive comments about those people. Please contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm to individuals which would not be justified, particularly if the school has not yet had a chance to investigate a complaint?

- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have to the school; any detrimental harm that the school may suffer as a result of the posting; and the impact that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

## **INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND MESSAGING APPS BY PARENTS**

Although social networking sites and messaging apps may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the school (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the school or using the school's formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

The school considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites and messaging apps. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the school / cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the school, its staff, its pupils or any of its parents.
- Making defamatory statements about the school, its staff, its pupils or any of its parents.
- Posting or sharing negative / offensive comments about specific staff, pupils or any parents.
- Posting or sharing racist, misogynistic, sexist, homophobic comments.
- Posting or sharing comments which threaten violence.

In the UK, free speech means the right to seek, receive and share information and ideas with others. But this freedom must be used responsibly and can be restricted when considered 'grossly offensive' or seen as targeting, threatening or encouraging hateful activity towards an individual or a group. The school will not tolerate targeting, threatening or encouraging hateful activity towards any member of its community.

## **INAPPROPRIATE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND MESSAGING APPS BY CHILDREN**

Parents should ensure that their child/ren are not accessing / using age-inappropriate social networking / messaging apps / internet sites. It is expected that parents explain to their children what is acceptable to post online, which is also supported by the school's weekly online safety class assemblies delivered via ProjectEVOLVE. Primary-aged children should not be accessing any social networking or messaging apps as they are not old enough to do so. Parents are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media and messaging apps. Please note that most social networking sites and messaging apps require the user to be at least 13 years old.

## COMMON APPS AND THEIR AGE RESTRICTIONS:

Here are some common apps / social media platforms that children tell us they use regularly:

**Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms**  
What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

Age Restriction	Apps
Under 13	Roblox, PopJam, FaceTime
13+	Twitter, Facebook and Messenger, Viber, WeChat, Monkey, Yubo, Dubsmash, Instagram, TikTok, Skype, Google Hangouts, Reddit, Snapchat, Pinterest
16+	WhatsApp, Telegram Messenger, Tumblr
17+	Line, Sarahah, Tellonym
18+ or 13 with parent's permission	YouTube, WeChat, Kik, Flickr, Play Store, Spotify (12 with parental permission)

Sourced from NSPCC website October 2019

Image courtesy of NSPCC.

Further information about the latest apps / social media platforms and their age restrictions can be found at <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/apps-guide/>. **We strongly urge parents to adhere to the age restrictions outlined above as this will help to keep your child safe online. We also strongly urge parents to monitor their child's online activity to ensure they are being safe online.** Our Online Safety Policy has more information regarding this matter.



# What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS



If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.



## RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

### WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

Universal, suitable for all ages	Parental Guidance required	Suitable for people aged 12 and over	Suitable for people aged 12 and over; anyone younger must be accompanied by an adult
Suitable for people aged 15 and over	Suitable for people aged 18 and over	Adult content only available in specially licenced cinemas and specialist retailers	

### WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

### LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

## RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

### WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>

PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:

FEAR	DRUGS	IN-GAME PURCHASES	VIOLENCE	BAD LANGUAGE	DISCRIMINATION	GAMBLING	SEX

### LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

### PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk)

Source: [www.pegi.info](http://www.pegi.info)



A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)  
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061



## **PROCEDURE THE SCHOOL WILL FOLLOW IF INAPPROPRIATE USE CONTINUES**

The school will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites **or messaging apps** inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site **and / or messaging app** in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites **and / or messaging apps** in a manner the school considers inappropriate, the school will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and / or legal action where the information posted or shared is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this.
- Set out the school's concerns to **the parent(s)** in writing, giving **parent(s)** a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed.
- Contact the Police where the school feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed, or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence.
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school-**managed** website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum.
- Contact the **admin** / host / provider of the social networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information.
- **Refer the individual to other agencies as necessary.**
- **Ban the individual from school site.**

### **USEFUL LINKS**

LLPS Online Safety Policy –

<https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/safeguarding-and-welfare>

LLPS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy –

<https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/safeguarding-and-welfare>

LLPS Complaints Policy – <https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/school-management-and-operations>

LLPS Safeguarding website –

<https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/safeguarding>

LLPS Expected Behaviour of Visitors / Parents on school premises –

<https://www.longlawfordprimaryschool.com/school-management-and-operations>

National Online Safety - <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/>

Internet Matters - <https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Internet Society - <https://www.internetsociety.org/about-internet-society/>

**Stop Hate UK - <https://www.stophateuk.org/about-hate-crime/what-is-online-hate-crime/online-hate-and-free->**

[speech/#:~:text=But%20this%20freedom%20must%20be,group%2C%20and%20even%20dehumanises%20them.](#)

[Reporting Hate Crime - https://www.report-it.org.uk/reporting\\_internet\\_hate\\_crime](https://www.report-it.org.uk/reporting_internet_hate_crime)

[Child exploitation and online protection \(CEOP\) - https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/](https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/)