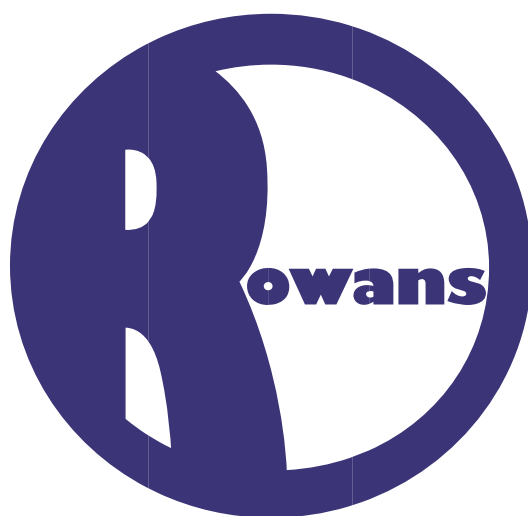




Social Media Policy

Policy Written/Reviewed by	Gwen Webb
Date of Review	September 2026
Date of Next Review	September 2027

Social Media Policy

This policy applies to The Rowans trustees, all teaching and other staff employed within the Rowans and volunteers, it sets out the guidance and expectations for using social media.

The Rowans is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the Academy are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- The Human Rights Act 1998;
- Common law duty of confidentiality, and;
- The Data Protection Act 2018

Personal information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable, information e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 2018
- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
- The Rowans sensitive information

The term social media may include (but is not limited to): blogs; wikis; social networking sites; forums; bulletin boards; online gaming; apps; video/photo sharing sites; chatrooms and instant messenger.

The Rowans feels very strongly that it is important to celebrate the successes and achievements of our pupils. The pupils who attend the Rowans have on the whole had a damaging and negative experience of education. They are disaffected and disengaged. Through sharing pupil's positive experiences on our school social media platforms, this supports changing the mindset of the children and young people, raising feelings of self-worth and a pride in both themselves and their school.

The welfare of the pupils is paramount and we recognize that there are potential risks associated with sharing images and work hard to mitigate this risk. As part of this commitment if requested when a pupil leaves The Rowans, we will ensure that any images or videos of this young person will be deleted from the school website and social media accounts within 72 hours. This request can be made by a pupil, parent, carer or local authority representative and all images and videos will be removed from school website and Rowans social media accounts in. This request can be made at any time after leaving The Rowans.

There are many examples of social media and it is understood that pupils and members of staff will use all different social media platforms for their own personal use.

This policy covers two types of social media activity

- Personal activity, done for your friends and contacts but not under or in the name of The Rowans .
- Activity carried out in the name of The Rowans which represents or appears to represent the official views of the school.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that the use of social media does not harm the interests of the children and young people that we support or damages the reputation of the school or school staff.

The Rowans recognises that new technologies are an integral and growing part of everyday life and make an important contribution to teaching and learning. This policy aims to:

- Assist staff working with children to work safely and responsibly with the internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice.
- Set clear expectations of behavior and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal and recreational use.
- Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behavior is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary and/or legal action will be taken.
- Support safer working practice.
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with pupils.
- Prevent adults abusing or misusing their position of trust.

The principles of the policy

- Adults who work with pupils are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and must avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults at The Rowans must work and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Adults at The Rowans must continually monitor and review their own practice in terms of the continually evolving world of social networking and ensure that they consistency follow this policy.
- The policy is to ensure that no-one posts anything on any social media platform that puts themselves or others at risk or harm.
- Privacy and child protection laws must be adhered to.

Social networking 'Must Nots'

- Staff or volunteers must not make comments on behalf of the school or claim to represent the views of the school unless they have been given permission to do so.
- Staff should not accept friend requests from current or past pupils or their families.
- Staff or volunteers must never have a pupil of the school or ex pupil as a 'friend' on a social media platform.
- Staff or volunteers must not request, or respond to, any personal information from a pupil.
- Staff or volunteers should never post confidential information about themselves, the school, the Trust, colleagues or pupils.
- Staff and volunteers should not make allegations on social networking sites about other employees, pupils and people connected to the Rowans. (Doing so may result in disciplinary action).
- Staff must not contact the media or press under any circumstances without prior permission for the head teacher

Social networking 'Shoulds'

- All adults connected to the Rowans should regularly review their social networking sites. This includes any images of themselves in inappropriate dress or situations.
- All adults should be aware of the need for confidentiality in their work and not refer to pupils, parents and staff or the business of the school.
- Adults within the Rowans setting need to understand the dangers of putting their personal information online. They must keep their personal phone numbers, logins and passwords safe.
- Staff and volunteers should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny. They should be circumspect in their communications with pupils to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives.
- Ensure that all your 'friends' on social media understand that you have a professional responsibility and therefore ensure that your privacy settings are up to date and if you are tagged into posts that they are appropriate.

This policy is designed to protect staff and everyone associated with the Rowans. It is not intended to govern colleagues' use of social networking but to set out expectations around on-line behaviour that could affect professional integrity and dignity.

Posting on social media on behalf of the school

- The Rowans permits all staff to have their own professional X (previously Twitter) account, which represents their subject and teaching on behalf of The Rowans.
- No other social media platform should be used on behalf of the school.
- There is a school Facebook page which is controlled by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher of the Rowans. This is a one-way platform tool and used for broadcasting purposes only.
- There is also a school WhatsApp group. All staff have the option of joining this group. The reason for this group is to convey 'school business' information quickly. This means of communication is not to be used for anything other than professional school business.
- Before posting on X (formally Twitter) on behalf of the school, staff should ask themselves questions about their post:
 - Is the post grammatically accurate?
 - Is the picture you are posting appropriate?
 - Are you sure that all photos of pupils are allowed?
 - Do you understand that once you have posted then the post will be there forever?
 - Can the post be taken out of context?
 - Could the post put anyone in danger?
 - Are you violating any laws or school policies?

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be identified as 'the use of modern communication technologies to embarrass, humiliate, threaten, or intimidate an individual in the attempt to gain power and control over them'

If cyberbullying does take place, employees and or pupils should keep records of the abuse, texts, emails or other communications. All incidents of cyberbullying should be reported to the Headteacher. All such incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in consideration of the wishes of the person who has

reported the bullying. It is for the individual, with their parents if they are a pupil to decide whether to report the incident to the police.