

Social Media Policy

POLICY APPROVAL

Approval Required	Indicate with a tick (✓)		**Annual Review Required**	Indicate with a tick (✓)	
	Yes ✓	No		Yes ✓	No
Approval Panel	Loren Janes				
Approved by	Name: Loren Janes		Signature:	Date: November 2025	
Policy Review Date	November 2026				
Policy Writer/s:	Charlotte Manford				

Scope

The policy applies to all use of social media; the term social media includes, but is not limited to, blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, bulletin boards, online gaming, apps, video/photo sharing sites, chatrooms and instant messenger apps or other online communication services. This policy applies to learners, parents/carers and all staff, including the governing body, leadership team, support staff, external contractors, visitors, volunteers and other individuals who work for, or provide services on behalf of the setting (collectively referred to as "staff" in this policy).

Purpose

This policy provides guidelines for the appropriate use of social media by learners, delivery team members, staff, and associates of Futures Changing Ltd. It aims to foster a respectful, safe, and professional online environment while maintaining the organisational reputation. Alongside safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all members of Futures Changing's community when using social media. The business recognises that online safety is an essential part of safeguarding and acknowledges its duty to ensure that all learners and staff are protected from potential harm when using social media. As outlined in our child protection policy, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Loren Janes (Managing Director) is recognised as having overall responsibility for online safety.

Guidelines for Social Media Use

All staff need to consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities. Any inference of rumours should be reported to the DSL (or deputy) immediately. Staff should never be drawn into a conversation based off hearsay or from information gained via social media particularly when specific to individuals.

Online concerns can be especially complicated, and support is available from:

• The UK Safer Internet Centre

provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and helpline@saferinternet.org.uk.

The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues.

• Internet Watch Foundation:

If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).

• Childline/IWF:

Report Remove is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online.

• UKCIS

Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice: Advice for education settings working with children and young people on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images or videos (also known as sexting and youth-produced sexual imagery.

• National Crime Agency's

CEOP Education Programme provides information for the children's workforce and parents and carers on protecting children and young people from online child sexual abuse.

• LGFL

'Undressed' provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.

Social media is very likely to play a central role in the fall out from any incident or alleged incident. There is the potential for contact between victim and alleged perpetrator(s) and a very high likelihood that friends from either side could harass the victim or alleged perpetrator(s) online and/or become victims of harassment themselves. Therefore, all reports to be made to DSL (or deputy) will be investigated by speaking will all parties where possible, referring the incident to the appropriate external partner if appropriate.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

General Conduct

- Always uphold the values of respect, inclusivity, and professionalism in all online interactions.
- Do not share, post, or comment on content that is offensive, discriminatory, or inappropriate.
- Refrain from cyberbullying, harassment, or personal attacks against individuals or groups.
- Treat everyone should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.
- online as offline and all members of our community are expected to engage in social media in a positive and responsible manner.
- All members of the community are advised not to post or share content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others on any social media service.
- We will control learner and staff access to social media whilst using centre provided devices and systems on site.
- Inappropriate or excessive use of social media during centre hours or whilst using centre devices may result in removal of internet access and/or disciplinary action.
- The use of social media or apps will be robustly risk assessed by the DSL prior to use. Any use will take place in accordance with out our E-safety policy.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of Futures Changing community on social media will be taken seriously. Concerns will be managed in accordance with the appropriate policies, including anti-bullying, child protection, whistleblowing, behaviour, code of conduct and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Staff Use of Social Media

- The use of social media during teaching hours for personal use is not permitted for staff.
- Safe and professional online behaviour is outlined for all members of staff, including volunteers, as part of our code of conduct/behaviour policy
- The safe and responsible use of social media sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction.
- Advice will be provided and updated via staff training and additional guidance and resources will be shared with staff as required on a regular basis.
- Any complaint about staff misuse of social media or policy breaches will be taken seriously in line with our child protection and complaints policy

Professional Reputation

All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the organisation. Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Setting appropriate privacy levels on their personal accounts/sites.
- Being aware of the implications of using location sharing services.
- Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
- Logging out of accounts after use.
- Using strong passwords.
- Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as being that of Futures Changing Ltd

Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of Futures Changing Ltd on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information being linked with the setting and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.

All staff are expected to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional reputation and legal framework. All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post on social media.

information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about learners and their family members or colleagues, will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.

Members of staff will notify the leadership team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.

Communicating with Learners and their Families

Staff will not use any personal social media accounts to contact learners or their family members.

- All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or add any current or past learners or their family members, as ‘friends’ on any personal social media accounts.
- Any communication from learners and parents/carers received on personal social media accounts will be reported to the DSL (or deputy).
- Any pre-existing relationships or situations, which mean staff cannot comply with this requirement, will be discussed with the DSL. Decisions made and advice provided in these situations will be formally recorded to safeguard learners, members of staff and the setting.
- If ongoing contact with learners is required once they have left the setting, members of staff will be expected to use existing official communication tools to do so.

Official Accounts – Futures Changing Ltd

- Only authorised personnel may create or manage social media accounts representing Futures Changing Ltd.
- Content must align with the organisation’s mission, values, and communication standards.
- Confidential or sensitive information should not be shared.

Staff and Associates

- Maintain professional boundaries with learners online; personal social media accounts should not be used for direct learner interactions.
- Do not post confidential learner information, including learning outcome grades, disciplinary records, or personal details.
- Avoid engaging in public debates that could harm the reputation of Futures Changing Ltd.
- Staff to be aware Child Sexual Exploitation can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.
- Staff to be aware that child-on-child sexual harassment is likely to violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Be vigilant for such occurrences reporting them to the DSL (or deputy) immediately.
- All staff should recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation. Online concerns can be especially complicated, all instances must be reported immediately to the DSL (or deputy**)**

Learners

- Be respectful when engaging with the business official social media pages.
- Avoid sharing personal or identifying information online.
- Report inappropriate or offensive content to the Managing Director immediately.
- Many online behaviour incidents amongst children and young people occur on social media outside the centre hours and off the premises. Parents/carers are responsible for this behaviour; however, some online incidents may affect our culture and/or pose a risk to children and young people's health and well-being. Where online behaviour online poses a threat or causes harm to another learner, could have repercussions for the orderly running of the centre when the learners is identifiable as a member of the centre, or if the behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of Futures Changing Ltd, action will be taken in line with our behaviour and anti-bullying policy and child protection and e-safety policies.
- Learners will be empowered to acquire the knowledge needed to use social media in a safe, considered and respectful way, and develop their resilience so they can manage and respond to online risks. Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to learners as part of an embedded and progressive safeguarding education approach.
- learners will be advised:

    - to consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details or information on social media
    - sites which could identify them and/or their location.
    - to only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others, for example by making profiles private.
    - not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other appropriate adults' permission, and to only do so when a trusted adult is present.
    - to use safe passwords.
    - to use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
    - how to block and report unwanted communications.
    - how to report concerns on social media, both within the setting and externally.

- Any concerns regarding learners' use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with appropriate existing policies, including behaviour and anti-bullying and child protection policies..
- The DSL (or deputy) will respond to social media concerns involving safeguarding or child protection risks in line with our child protection policy.

- Sanctions and/or pastoral/welfare support will be implemented and offered to learners as appropriate, in line with our child protection and behaviour policy. Civil or legal action may be taken if necessary.
- Concerns regarding learners' use of social media will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media services and games.

External Speakers, Influencers, and Content Providers

- All external speakers, content creators, or social media influencers involved with learners must be vetted prior to engagement.
- Checks include safeguarding references, background checks, and assessment of content for appropriateness.
- External content must not promote extremist views, discrimination, or unsafe behaviours.
- Staff supervising these sessions are responsible for monitoring interactions and ensuring learner safety.

Monitoring and Moderation

- Official Futures Changing Ltd social media accounts will be regularly monitored by the DSL, Communications Lead, or authorised staff.
- Inappropriate, harmful, or illegal content posted by learners, staff, or external users will be removed promptly.
- Incidents requiring intervention will be escalated to the DSL and recorded in line with safeguarding procedures.

Training and Awareness

- All staff and learners will receive training on safe social media use, including:
  - Cyberbullying and harassment
  - Online grooming and exploitation
  - Fake news, misinformation, and extremist content
  - Age-appropriate guidance for specific platforms
- Training is recorded, reviewed annually, and updated in response to emerging online risks.

Prevent and Radicalisation Awareness Online

- Staff and learners must remain vigilant for online content or communications that could indicate radicalisation or extremist influence.
- Concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL or Prevent lead.
- All online safeguarding concerns will be addressed in line with Futures Changing Ltd's Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy.

Third-Party Apps and Emerging Platforms

- Any new apps, games, or social media platforms introduced to learners must be risk-assessed for:
  - Age-appropriateness
  - Privacy and data protection compliance
  - Potential exposure to harmful or extremist content
- Approval must be obtained from the DSL or senior management before use.

Data Retention and Audit

- Social media content, messages, and incident reports will be retained in line with GDPR and data protection policy requirements.
- Regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance, monitor trends, and identify any safeguarding concerns.

- Retained data will be used solely for safeguarding, policy compliance, or quality improvement purposes.

Communication and Consent

- Written consent must be obtained from learners, parents/carers, and staff before posting photos, videos, or other media online.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time, and content must be removed promptly if requested.
- All social media activity will comply with data protection and privacy policies.

Escalation Procedures

- Serious incidents online, such as cyberbullying, sexual harassment, or radicalisation concerns, must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- The DSL will assess the incident, implement safeguarding measures, and, if necessary, involve:
    - Local authority safeguarding teams
    - Police or CEOP
    - Multi-agency support services
- Outcomes, actions taken, and lessons learned will be recorded and shared with relevant staff while maintaining confidentiality.

Privacy and Security

- Do not post photos, videos, or other media of learners or staff without consent.
- Follow data protection legislation alongside the privacy policy and Data Protection policy.
- Use strong passwords and security settings to protect accounts from unauthorised access.

Consequences for Policy Breaches and Violations

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, including warnings, suspension of social media privileges, academic penalties, or legal consequences as per organisational, awarding body and sector guidelines.

All members of the community are informed of the need to report policy breaches or concerns in line with existing centre policies and procedures.

After any investigations are completed, the Manging Director will confirm outcomes to associated parties, this will include identify lessons learnt followed by the implementation of any policy or curriculum changes required.

Futures Changing Ltd require staff, parents/carers and learners to work in partnership with us to resolve issues.

All members of the community will respect confidentiality and the need to follow the official procedures for reporting concerns.

Learners, parents and staff will be informed of our complaints procedure and staff will be made aware of the whistleblowing procedure.

If we are unsure how to proceed with an incident or concern, the DSL (or a deputy) will seek advice from the Essex LA Safeguarding team or other agency in accordance with our child protection policy.

Reporting Violations

Concerns regarding social media misuse should be reported to Loren Janes, Managing Director. loren@changefutures.co.uk

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum and updated additionally as necessary to adapt to evolving digital trends and legal requirements.

Links with other policies

This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans, including but not limited to:

- Behaviour and Antibullying policy
- British Values Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Confidentiality and Data Protection policy
- Code of conduct (staff and learners)
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education policy (RSE)
- Parental Engagement Policy
- Privacy Notice
- E-safety policy