

Instagram and Online Communications Policy

The general policy of Stort Valley Schools Trust is that schools workers/Chaplains are not encouraged to communicate with young people via social networking apart from officially approved exceptions. In the current climate and in a spirit of not wishing to see Young People isolated the exceptions are as follows –

The official SVST youth Instagram page.

The policy for use of this are as follows –

- The page's content is to be controlled by Nicola Williamson (staff member), with oversight access and passwords held by Kathryn Winfield (Trustee) and Kt Haynes (staff member) for Safeguarding and Best Practice.
- Pictures of individual children or YP's faces will not be permitted, other than generic images; pictures of events are allowed.
- The page will be used for general information, vlogs, encouraging images and publicising clubs and events etc.
- The messenger part of the service will not be used. Although we acknowledge we cannot stop people messaging us, we will not respond through the platform's messaging service.
- The page will be public allowing anyone access, offering total transparency.
- SVST will not "follow" any individual back, but may follow other relevant organisations.
- Schools Workers/Chaplains will not "follow" any of the young people we work with.
- Engaging in conversation through the 'comments' section of Instagram is not permitted, however responding briefly to comments is. We recognise that the platform is a vehicle to communicate and we welcome this.
- We still strongly advise that this is communication and not conversation. We acknowledge that there is a difference. SVST endorse signposting those who reach out via Instagram to get in touch via email or at school.
- To this end, Schools Workers should consider the nature and appropriateness of comments, which should be clear, kind and concise.

SVST Microsoft Teams Account

- Workers/Chaplains should only engage in communication via Teams with prior parental and school consent. We accept that during certain times this form of support is necessary.
- A time for the meeting should be set, kept to and logged.
- A written record of the meeting should be kept.
- If a YP reaches out via Teams at a time that is not their usual slot, clear, concise and unambiguous language must be used. Listen, empathise and encourage the YP to meet with you at school. As above, communication rather than conversation is advised. Log the fact that the YP has reached out via Teams with a staff member of their school.
- All contact should be made within the hours of 8am and 6pm.

Zoom

- If contacting children or YP's via Zoom for mentoring the above policy for Teams should be followed.

Schools Workers/Chaplains should –

- Set their personal Instagram profiles to "Private" and must not accept any request to "follow" from young people they work with for the Trust.
- Use an appropriate friendly but not over-familiar or personal tone in communications.
- Be warm and friendly but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.

- Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share and be circumspect about using abbreviations or short cut communications to avoid any possible misinterpretation.
- Do not share personal information with young people, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which would be appropriate as part of your role.

Approved at Trustee Meeting 25 May 2021