Rationale:

We live in a technology-rich world, where social media is a part of daily life for many of our parents and carers. The opportunities created by instant access to social media platforms like 'X' (formerly Twitter) provide valuable opportunities for our school to celebrate and communicate how we are living out our mission with our parents and carers. X also provides a back-up method by which school can instantly communicate important messages with the parents and carers of St Richard's.

This policy will explain how X will be used at St Richard's RC Primary School, as well as the benefits that will arise from its proper use.

What is X?

X is a popular social media application which is used to communicate thoughts and ideas and usually references people, places and activities. These 'posts' tend to invite replies or 'reposts' (when the message is passed on to other X users and their followers). Posts can have photographs, videos and links attached to them. Another function of X is that users are able to Direct Message (DM) other users should they wish something not to be made for public viewing. At St Richard's, we will **not** be sending Direct Messages under any circumstances.

Why does St Richard's RC Primary School use X?

There are two main reasons why we use X:

- To share, showcase and celebrate the wonderful things happening at St Richard's RC Primary School with our parents as well as a potentially global audience of X users.
- To have an additional method of relaying urgent and important news and announcements (but not as a replacement for the primacy of the weekly school newsletter or Parentmail texts)

A positive bi-product of the first reason above is that X allows us to build an archive of evidence (including photos and videos) which capture and celebrate the breadth and range of activities at St Richard's. In turn, this removes the need to update class pages on the school website as X does it more comprehensively and easily. X will be embedded into the home page of our school website.

Limitations

At St Richard's, X will never be used to engage with individual parents directly (either sending or receiving). Nor will X replace the primacy of regular weekly communication with parents and carers via the newsletter. X will not replace the primacy of Parentmail texts to deliver urgent information to the parents of St Richard's. Rather, X will be supplementary and complimentary to the two methods of communication described above.

X organisation

At St Richard's, there will only be one whole school X account. One member of staff has been designated our X Lead (Mr Sullivan, Computing Lead).

Each class at St Richard's should post once a week. Posts should identify both the class and the year group (eg – 'in C10/Y5...'). Half of each class's posts should have as their subject: Catholic Life and Mission, Prayer and Liturgy or curriculum RE.

Posts should include written text (similar in length to 'Four Photos' descriptions, about 280 characters including spaces) and must be accompanied by a maximum of 4 photos or videos. These must be emailed to the X Lead by class teachers each week. This can be anytime during school hours but must be by 4pm each Thursday.

Our X Lead must only ever post from school equipment and the X Lead must never use his/her own personal device to post from the official school X account. In addition to our own original posts, the whole school X account will be used to relay other X users' posts which are of interest and relevance to our school community.

Our X Lead will work with our subject leaders to curate the school's list of who we follow on X.

X etiquette

Posts from X are necessarily short but any posts from our official school account must be grammatically correct and must not contain text language (eg - 'lol', 'gr8' or 'l8r').

In the unlikely event of a parent or carer posting a negative comment on any of the school's X content, the school's response will be to **not** reply/engage at all via X. Instead, we will remove the comments immediately and engage in face to face dialogue with the parent or carer. This is unlikely to happen as parents and the public in general are increasingly aware of the negative consequences to themselves of posting anything incendiary, defamatory or libellous which might bring the name of the school into disrepute.

At St Richard's, staff may use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase in a post (e.g. #LymePark2025). This helps to categorise posts and helps them to show more easily in an X search. Clicking or tapping on a hash-tagged word in any message shows other posts that include that hashtag. Hashtags can be included anywhere in a post. Careful consideration to the naming of hashtags should always be prioritised to avoid mis-categorisation.

Safeguarding pupils

In order to safeguard the pupils at St Richard's RC Primary School, no names of pupils will ever be used alongside any images of pupils. Before the launch of our X account, each pupil's parent/carer will be sent a letter which will request permission for their child's image to appear on X posts. The letter will link to this policy.

It will be the responsibility of the class teacher sending the post ingredients to the X Lead to double-check which pupils can and cannot appear on X **before** anything is posted.

Posts sent by St Richard's RC Primary School must always adhere to this protocol in order to protect vulnerable pupils as well as to comply fully with parental choice.

Who can follow St Richard's RC Primary School on X?

Anyone can follow the school's X account. Our primary intended audience is the parents and carers of pupils at the school. Weekly checks will take place by the X Lead to check recent followers. Staff members should bring to the X Lead's attention any organisation or individual who begins to follow the school on X and who may be deemed unsuitable. Any such individual or organisation will be blocked immediately. The X Lead will make this decision on a case-by-case basis. Parents will be encouraged (eg – in the newsletter and via ParentMail) to follow the whole school X account in order to receive the information the school is posting to X.

Under no circumstances will pupils be allowed to follow the school's X feed (our pupils are all too young to have an X account). Should this happen, the X Lead will speak to the pupil and block the account at the earliest opportunity.

Dealing with inappropriate content and interactions:

St Richard's RC Primary School welcomes engagement (likes, replies and reposts). However, we deem any of the following to be inappropriate:

- Offensive language or remarks
- Negative remarks aimed at the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school;
- Unsuitable images or content posted into its feed;
- Unsuitable images or content finding its way from another's account into our school's feed.
- Images or text that infringe upon copyright;
- Comments that aim to undermine the school, its staff, parents, governors or others affiliated with the school.

Any inappropriate content will be reported to X and its users will be blocked. Incidents of a more serious nature may be reported to the appropriate authority.

Monitoring and review of this policy:

This policy will be reviewed at the end of every academic year.