Social Media Policy

Updated 29 April 2025
by Mr Dan Morris
(Director of Operations & Compliance)

Approved by Head:

Date: 06 May 2025

Introduction

A social networking site is any website which enables its users to create profiles, form relationships and share information with other users. It also includes sites which have online discussion forums, chat-rooms, media posting sites, blogs and any other social space online. It includes but is not limited to, sites such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and Wikipedia.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during working hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using school IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff or any other IT equipment.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our IT equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details so far as this is consistent with the right of an individual to private and family life.

Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may result in disciplinary action.

Implementation of the Policy

The Head has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, but has delegated day to day responsibility for its operation to the Director of Operations & Compliance. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risk also lies with the Director of Operations & Compliance.

All senior managers have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and if necessary enforcing this policy by taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Director of Operations & Compliance. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Head.

Relationship with Other School policies

If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from using social media to:

- breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
- breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality;
- breach our disciplinary rules;
- defame or disparage the school or our affiliates, parents, staff, pupils, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders;
- harass or bully other staff in any way or breaches policies outlined in our staff handbook;
- unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties or breach our equal opportunities policy;

- breach our information security policy;
- breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media fraudulently or in a misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

Behaviour online can be permanent and so staff must be extra cautious about what they say as it can be harder to retract.

Staff must also be aware of the particular risks to internet security that social media presents and so to comply with the existing school policy on IT use. They must take any extra measures necessary not allow any of their actions on social media sites to create vulnerability to any school systems.

Staff who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Responsible Use of Social Media

Staff must be aware that their role comes with particular responsibilities and they must adhere to the school's approach to social media.

Staff must:

- ensure that wherever possible their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that pupils cannot access information relating to their personal lives;
- obtain the prior written approval of the Head, to the wording of any personal profile which you intend to create where the school is named or mentioned on a social networking site;
- seek approval from the Head before they speak about or make any comments on behalf of the school on the internet or through any social networking site;
- report to the Head immediately if they see any information on the internet or on social networking sites that disparages or reflects poorly on the School;
- immediately remove any internet postings which are deemed by the school to constitute a breach of this or any other school policy;
- consider whether a particular posting puts their effectiveness as a teacher at risk;
- post only what they want the world to see.

Staff must not:

- provide references for other individuals, on social or professional networking sites, as such references whether positive or negative can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school;
- post or publish on the internet or on any social networking site, any reference to the School, your colleagues, parents or pupils;
- use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. Staff must exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characteristics;
- discuss pupils or colleagues or criticise the school or staff;
- post images that include pupils;
- initiate friendships with pupils on any personal social network sites;
- accept pupils as friends on any such sites; staff must decline any pupil-initiated friend requests.

- share or distribute any images, videos, recordings, or AI-generated ('deepfake') content featuring pupils, staff, or school premises without explicit prior consent. This includes material posted on personal accounts.

The Use of Social Media for School Purposes

Social media is only used by St Peter's Preparatory School in relation to the marketing and promotion of the school by staff with explicit authority to do so. It should not be used for purposes relating to the school's business or the delivery of its curriculum to pupils unless the prior authority of the Head has been obtained.

Where the use of social media is authorised for such purposes this policy must be followed.

Any social media accounts (including blogs, forums, twitter etc), sites or pages used or set up for the purpose of furthering the School's business or facilitating the provision of the curriculum to its pupils shall remain the property of the school and the Head must have access to it.

Personal Use of Social Media

Personal use of social media is not accessible through the school internet security systems. It is permitted from staff members' own devices whilst in the staff room.

We prohibit staff from using their work email address for any personal use of social media.

The Monitoring of Social Media

In accordance with the Guide to Data Protection Regulation School Privacy Notice, as part of its legitimate interest the school may monitor (as appropriate) use of the school's IT and communications systems in accordance with the school's IT Use Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school therefore reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that its rules are being complied with. Messages, files, data, documents, facsimiles, telephone conversations, social media posts conversations or messages, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems pertaining to individuals would be included in such monitoring and in signing the privacy notice staff are consenting to such monitoring. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created and may delete such copies from time to time without notice. Details on these timescales can be found in the Data Protection Policy.

Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.

Social Media and the End of Employment

If a member of staff's employment with our school should end, for whatever reason, any personal profiles on social networking sites should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that you are no longer employed or associated with our school.

All professional contacts that a member of staff has made through their course of employment belong to the school, regardless of whether or not the member of staff has made social media connections with them.

All members of staff agree that on the termination of employment they will provide to the Director of Operations & Compliance any relevant passwords and other information to allow access to any social media site, pages or accounts which has been used or set up for the purpose of furthering the school's business or facilitating the provision of its curriculum and will relinquish any authority they may have to manage or administer any such site, page or account.

Revision History		
Date Revised	**Changes**	**Reviewed By**
29 Apr 2025	Added paragraph on staff use of AI, both for work and personally on social media accounts.	Dan Morris (Dir. of Operations)