

# Social Media Policy

## Abstract

The Policy seeks to provide support and guidance to social media users who are associated with the School (employees, students), and who establish and maintain their social media accounts on behalf of the school. Please read alongside the *Safeguarding: Child Protection Policy and Procedure*, *Anti-bullying Policy* and *Acceptable Use Policy* and related policies. The policy aims to:

- Promote effective and innovative use of social media as part of the school's activities
- Encourage good practice, and provide support and guidance
- Define the responsibilities of individuals for the use of social media for the school's purposes
- Highlight and minimise the potential risks of using social media
- Clarify where and how existing policies and guidelines apply to social media
- Coordinate and oversee the response to violations in accordance with UK legislation, national and international regulations and other School policies.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 At Southbank International School we recognise the opportunities offered by social media and seek to promote the positive use of these online tools for the purposes of education and communication within the school community.

1.2. The School recognises that staff, parents, and students utilise social media within personal and professional contexts. This policy sets out guidelines staff must adhere to for both professional and personal use in order to maintain control and present an informed and professional approach to these online tools.

## 2.0 Safeguarding student use of social media

2.1 At Southbank International School we seek to promote the positive and educational use of social media and strive to present the opportunities available to students through engaging with online social platforms for their own educational and personal development.

2.2 The students' use of social media and online resources both for school and personal uses are subject to the school's Acceptable Use Agreement (AUP).

2.3 Staff should be aware of their duty of care and responsibilities for safeguarding students while engaging with social media and provide suitable advice and guidance.

2.4 All school staff are expected to be aware of their responsibilities set out in the school's AUP policy and should promote and monitor the acceptable student use of technology. Staff should be aware of the channels in which to report any concerns of misconduct.

2.5 If a child reports that they are upset, disturbed or feeling bullied or pressured into actions or behaviour by comments on social media, staff should immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for further, appropriate and confidential investigations. Responding to or investigating these matters using social media is prohibited.

2.6 Staff have a responsibility to be aware of indicators of vulnerability regarding radicalisation and extremism and the critical role social media plays in this. Refer to *The Prevent guidance For England and Wales 2015* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) July 2015*.

### 3.0 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to personal use of social media and any professional school online presentations and accounts on all social media platforms.

3.2 The terms *Social media platforms, sites* and *accounts* referred to in this policy are any sites where content is posted directly by the users and shared with both public and private followers.

3.3 This includes (but not limited to):

- Resource and Content sharing and collecting sites eg *YouTube, Padlet, Pinterest, Tumblr*, Blogging and Mini-Blogging sites eg *Twitter, Wordpress, Kidblog*; Profile and Discussion sites eg *Edmodo, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn* and Wikis eg *Wikipedia, PBWorks*
- Curriculum/Class Websites created by teachers eg *Firefly*

3.4 This policy makes the distinction between:

- **Professional posts and accounts** being those relating to school events, curriculum resources and guidance and matters of interest to the school community and commissioned directly by the school.
- **Personal posts and accounts** being those related to staff members endeavours and opinions not connected to their professional lives or school activities and interests.

3.5 For professional accounts this policy sets out

- Action to take before setting up an account
- Expectations for conduct and maintenance on professional accounts

3.6 For personal accounts this policy sets out

- Expectations for conduct

### 4.0 The legal framework

4.1 Southbank International School is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of the school 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. Refer to The Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) July 2015*

4.2 Disclosure of confidential information on social media is unacceptable and in contravention of statutory obligations including:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Common law duty of confidentiality
- The Data Protection Act 1998

4.3 Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Personal-identifiable information (eg student or employee records which are protected by the Data Protection Act 1998)

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- Information divulged with the expectation of confidentiality
- Business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Commercially sensitive information
- Politically sensitive information

4.4 Use of social media should adhere to regulations set out to protect individuals and organisations from libel, defamation, harassment and breach of copyright. These statutory instruments include:

- The Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003
- Copyright, Designs, and Patents Act 1988

## 5.0 Principles for creating social media on behalf of Southbank International School

5.1 Be purposeful, consistent and fair

5.2 Before creating social media accounts, staff are expected to be clear on the purpose and intentions of the site, the intended scope, content and longevity of the site, use clear school branding and ensure that appropriate parental consent is held.

5.3 Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purposes for using social media and a clear statement of intent should be given.

5.4 The proposed audience and level of interactive engagement with the site should be set out at the outset to the school lead team. For example details are required on whether students, school staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the site and how posts will be moderated. See Appendix A for a Proposal Form (NB staff creating Firefly pages are not required to complete this form).

5.5 The regularity of content posting should be set out and adhered to. Staff members must consider how much time they are able to commit to the proposed site. They should be aware that maintaining a site is not a one-off task, but involves a considerable time commitment.

5.6 The lead team must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the site refreshed and relevant. It is important that enough staff members are trained and are able to maintain and moderate a site in case of staff absences or turnover.

5.7 There must be a careful exit strategy and a clear plan from the outset about how long the site will last. It must not be neglected, creating a potential risk to the school's brand and image.

5.8 Consideration must be given to how school branding, logos and related images will be used on the site so it is consistent with other school publications.

5.9 Consideration must also be given to how the success of the site will be evaluated to assess whether the site has achieved the proposed objectives.

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5.10 To guide these considerations and long term maintenance and evaluation of the site a Proposal Form and Running Record are given in appendix B

## 6.0 Principles of conduct on social media on behalf of Southbank International School

6.1 Be professional, responsible and respectful

6.2 Staff members participating in social media for work purposes are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as when using other media or giving public presentations on behalf of the School.

6.3 It is expected that staff maintain a separate outlet for conducting personal and professional online interchanges. Staff should not put themselves into a situation where there is a conflict of interest between work for the school and personal interests.

6.4 Staff must not engage in activities involving social media which may bring the School or the associated bodies into disrepute. Staff must also not represent their personal views as the views of the School on any social media or web platform.

6.5 It is prohibited to:

- Discuss personal information about students, the School, or other staff on social media
- Use social media to attack, insult, or defame any students, family members, colleagues, associated organisations, or the School.

6.6 All social media use must be accurate, fair, transparent, and professional when representing the School.

6.7 At all times, posts should adhere to parental consent. Ensure that you have parental consent before posting images (If a parent has refused to have their child photographed or have those photographs posted, it is imperative that all staff respect that preference and are fully informed of these cases)

6.8 Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with students or to enable students to communicate with each other, unless otherwise agreed.

6.9 It is important to be careful when posting student information online. To ensure personal information is not unwittingly shared and that posts remain within the purpose of the site these guidelines should be adhered to:

- Do not use the student's full name in posts
- Avoid naming or listing students in photographs and if giving a student name is unavoidable this should be first name only
- Using the class, group or year name is accepted practice
- Avoid posting images of individual students unless talking about an individual achievement obliges you to do so
- Tagging or captioning images with student names (or staff and parent names) should be avoided and any tags applied by a contributor (e.g. a parent tagging their child's photo) should be removed. It should be explained to parents that this is not school policy as appropriate

- Every effort should be made to ensure balance and fairness in coverage: this includes balanced reports on sporting or competitive activities, equal representation of all students within a timeframe and reference to all groups involved in a profiled activity
- Ensure that all links to external sites are appropriate and safe
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse should be removed and a system of moderation should be in place
- Do not use private or direct message facilities. Only ever engage with students on social media where the messages are public and discourage parents from sending private messages to staff members via the professional account
- Do not post images that clearly display parent or teacher car number plates
- Only post images and updates that uphold the school reputation and general personality of the school
- Use proper spelling and grammar in all updates – if there is a character limitation, explain that it is update 1/2 or 2/2 rather than using text speak
- Only post updates that are relevant to the general school following, unless responding to a particular question
- Never post in all caps as this is generally accepted as inflammatory or remarks made in anger
- Report any negative comments and do not engage in responses to negative comments, seek advice from the lead team before taking appropriate action
- It is acceptable to retweet or thank people for positive messages
- Information must be worthwhile and accurate
- Updates must respect the audience and be sensitive in tone
- Personal opinions should not be expressed on official sites.

6.10 Staff should not be obliged to provide feedback on a student's progress, school performance or any similar information through a social media to any parent or member of the school community. Staff members that are asked or pressured into divulging this form of information should contact the Senior Leadership Team for immediate guidance.

6.11 If a staff member becomes aware of posts that are in breach of these guidelines they should inform the Senior Leadership Team immediately.

6.12 Social media is not and should not be used as a conduit to air grievances, problems or raise issues. If a parent or member of the wider body does so using a social media site, they should be contacted by other means and their complaints should be addressed in accordance to the school complaints policy. It is important that staff report any negative comments on the site to the Senior Leadership Team so that an appropriate response can be initiated.

## 7.0 Personal Use

7.1 Members of the school who use personal social media accounts must not give the impression that their social media site represents the voice of the school. In order to maintain personal privacy and a healthy distinction between personal and professional lives, it is expected that staff should take all measures to maintain the confidential integrity of their own social media profiles.

7.2 Staff members should be cautious about identify themselves as employees of Southbank International School in their personal social media. Information on these sites may be linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive frontline services. The school reserves the right to request the removal of content from an official social media account and from a personal account if it is deemed that the account or its submissions pose a risk to the reputation of the school or to that of one of its members.

7.3 Staff members should use the maximum available privacy options on social media profiles where they post about their personal lives. Staff should keep their passwords and personal account identification confidential and are expected to not access their personal accounts while on School premises.

7.4 When posting from personal profiles, it is important to remember which posts are visible to the public and which are not. Posts on a personal profile with high privacy settings cannot be seen by the general public, but posts in a public group from the same profile can be. Likewise, event photographs posted on venue social media sites are accessible to the general public, including students and their parents.

7.5 Staff members must not have contact with any students either currently or recently enrolled in the school through social media, unless the students are family members or have a relationship with the staff that preceded their entry to the School.

7.6 Staff members should not have contact with students' family members through social media if that contact is likely to create a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity or professional abilities.

7.7 Staff should not be obliged to provide feedback on a student's progress, school performance or any similar information through personal social media to any parent or member of the school community. Staff members that are asked or pressured into divulging this form of information should contact the Senior Leadership Team for immediate guidance.

7.8 Staff members must decline friend requests from students. It is allowed to discuss these requests and point students towards official school accounts, but this discussion must not take place over social media. Staff should also not accept friend request from any ex-students under the age of 18.

7.9 On leaving the school's service, staff members must not contact school students by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact students from their former schools by means of personal social media.

7.10 Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues, Cognita staff and other parties and school corporate information must not be discussed on their personal sites.

7.11 Limitations placed on the school regarding posting student full names and identifying information, as well as photographs, extends to personal social media photographs, videos or any other types of image of students and their families, or images depicting staff members wearing school uniforms or clothing with school logos, or images identifying school premises must not be published on personal social media.

7.12 School email addresses and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.

7.13 If staff members would like to communicate with students via social media sites or to enable students to contact each other through private groups, they must seek the approval of the school and do so using professional social media.

7.14 If any staff member is aware of inappropriate communication it must be reported immediately to the lead team as sensitively appropriate. Matters that are considered to be safeguarding concerns should be recorded and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

## 8.0 Monitoring and review

8.1 Southbank International School monitors internet usage and email activity without prior notification or authorisation from users.

8.2 Users of the School system and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive using the school system or accounts

8.3 A record of professional social media should be held by the lead team who lead (see appendix B) and regular reviews should be carried out to ensure that social media is being used in accordance with the principles set out in this document.

8.4 The school reserves the right to discontinue any professional social media that is found to be unproductive or in conflict with school ethos, without warning.

8.4 Breaches of any part of this policy may result in disciplinary action taken against the staff member/s involved.

8.5 The extent of disciplinary action is dependent on the severity of the breach. Consequences can include informal verbal warnings, formal verbal warnings, removal from School social media duties, or further disciplinary action and dismissal.

## Appendix A

### Social Media Proposal Form

Social Media Creation Proposal Form	
Proposal By	
Department/Role	
Social Media Platform	
Purpose of Social Media Site	
What are the aims you propose to achieve by setting up this site?	
What is the proposed content of the site?	
Who will be the main audience of this site?	
Maintenance of site	
Who will be the administrators of the site? 2 minimum are required.	
Who will be able to contribute to the site?	
How will posts be moderated and reviewed?	
Who will host this site?	
Regularity of posts	
When will the site go live?	
How long will the site be active for?	
How often/regularly will new posts be applied?	
Further supporting information	
Please give any further information to support your proposal	
Signature: I have read and will adhere to the school Social Media Policy	
Approval	
Approval by	
Review by	
Review date	

**Social Media Policy Exemplar**



**Appendix B  
Social Media Recording Sheet**

Name of site	Administrators	Approval date	Key audience	Date and initial to state this site has been reviewed and has ongoing approval						