



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION/RATIONALE

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Safeguard all children
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school.

Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snap Chat, Instagram) is a broad term for any kind of online platform which enables people to directly interact with each other. However some games, for example Minecraft or World of Warcraft and video sharing platforms such as Youtube have social media elements to them.

The school recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. Staff, parents/carers and students are actively encouraged to find creative ways to use social media. However, there are some risks associated with social media use, especially around the issues of safeguarding, bullying and personal reputation. This policy aims to encourage the safe use of social media by the school, its staff, parents, carers and children.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to **Oaks Park High School Governing body, all teaching and other staff. This policy** is subject to the school's **Codes of Conduct and Acceptable Use Agreements**. This policy: Applies to **all staff** and to **all online communications** which directly or indirectly, represent the school. Applies to such online communications posted at any time and from anywhere. Encourages the safe and responsible use of social media through training and education

Defines the monitoring of public social media activity pertaining to the school. The school respects privacy and understands that staff and students may use social media forums in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the school's reputation are within the scope of this policy.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school account or using the school name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Personal communications are those made via personal social media accounts. In all cases, where a personal account is used which associates itself with the school or impacts on the school, it must be made clear that the member of staff is not communicating on behalf of the school with an appropriate disclaimer. Such personal communications are within the scope of this policy. Personal communications which do not refer to or impact upon the school are outside the scope of this policy.

Digital communications with students are also considered. *Staff may use social media to communicate with learners via a school social media account for teaching and learning purposes but must consider whether this is appropriate and consider the potential implications.*

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Oaks Park High 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. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:

- **The Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Common law duty of confidentiality, and**
- **The Data Protection Act 1998.**

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: Person-identifiable information, e.g. pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998

- Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality
- School or Council business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
- Politically sensitive information. Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- **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, and**
- **Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.**

Oaks Park High School could be held vicariously responsible for acts of their employees in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, etc or who defame a third party while at work may render Oaks Park High School liable to the injured party.

4. RELATED POLICIES

These policies should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Staff Acceptable Use Policy.
- E-safety Policy

5. PRINCIPLES - BE PROFESSIONAL, RESPONSIBLE AND RESPECTFUL

You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and professional lives separate. You should not put yourself in a position where there is a conflict between your work for the school and your personal interests.

You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Oaks Park High School into disrepute. You must not represent your personal views as those of Oaks Park High School on any social medium. You must not discuss personal information about pupils, Oaks Park High School and other professionals you interact with as part of your job on social media.

You must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, and other organisations, Oaks Park High School

You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of Oaks Park High School.

6. USING SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHALF OF Oaks Park High School

Staff members can only use official school sites for communicating with pupils or to enable pupils to communicate with one another.

There must be a strong pedagogical or business reason for creating official school sites to communicate with pupils or others. Staff must not create sites for trivial reasons which could expose the school to unwelcome publicity or cause reputation damage. Official school sites must be created only according to the requirements specified in Staff members must at all times act in the best interests of children and young people when creating, participating in or contributing content to social media sites.

7. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff members must not identify themselves as employees Oaks Park High School on their personal webspace. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of staff members, particularly those involved in providing sensitive front line services.

Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil; whether from Oaks Park High School or any other school, unless the pupils are family members.

Oaks Park High School does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via personal social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.

Staff members must not have any contact with pupils' family members through personal social media if that contact is likely to constitute a conflict of interest or call into question their objectivity.

If staff members wish to communicate with pupils through social media sites or to enable pupils to keep in touch with one another, they can only do so with the approval of the IT Forum and through official school sites created according to the requirements specified Appendix C.

Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils they receive in their personal social media accounts. Instead, if they receive such requests from pupils who are not family members, they must discuss these in general terms in class and signpost pupils to become 'friends' of the official school site.

On leaving Oaks Park High School service, staff members must not contact Oaks Park High School's pupils by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact pupils from their former schools by means of personal social media.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about pupils and their family members, colleagues, and other parties information must not be discussed on their personal web space.

Photographs, videos or any other types of image of pupils and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school uniforms or clothing with school logos or images identifying sensitive school premises must not be published on personal web space.

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.

Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia in a personal capacity at work. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the employer's IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as if it comes from the employer itself.

Oaks Park High School logos or brands must not be used or published on personal web space.

Caution is advised when inviting work colleagues to be 'friends' in personal social networking sites. Social networking sites blur the line between work and personal lives and it may be difficult to maintain professional relationships or it might be just too embarrassing if too much personal information is known in the workplace.

Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites as strictly as they can and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online; it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is a good idea to use a separate email address just for social networking so that any other contact details are not given away.

Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection /E Safety Coordinator

Members of the school staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

Staff should not use personal social media, email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.

Oaks Park High School does not permit the use of social media whilst at work using school equipment.

8. PROCESS FOR CREATING SCHOOL ACCOUNTS

The school is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a "Friends of the school" Facebook page. Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a case to the IT forum

- The aim of the account
- The intended audience
- How the account will be promoted
- Who will run the account (at least two staff members should be named)
- Will the account be open or private/closed

Following consideration by the IT Forum an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the IT forum must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the school has read and understood this policy and received appropriate training. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the school, including volunteers or parents.

Pupil/Students

- Staff are not permitted to follow or engage with current or prior pupils/students of the school on any personal social media network account.
- The school's education programme should enable the pupils/students to be safe and responsible users of social media.
- Pupils/students are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. Any offensive or inappropriate comments will be resolved by the use of the school's behaviour policy

Parents/Carers

- If parents/carers have access to a school learning platform where posting or commenting is enabled, parents/carers will be informed about acceptable use.
- Parents/Carers are encouraged to comment or post appropriately about the school. In the event of any offensive or inappropriate comments being made, the school will ask the parent/carer to remove the post and invite them to discuss the issues in person. If necessary, refer parents to the school's complaints procedures.

9. MONITORING OF INTERNET USE

Oaks Park High School monitors usage of its Internet and other IT services on a daily basis as part of our commitment to security.

Social media accounts will must be monitored regularly and frequently. Regular monitoring and intervention is essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a school social media account.

Behaviour

- The school requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgements about staff. School social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the school.

- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to school activity.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the school and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.
- The use of social media by staff while at work may be monitored, in line with school policies. *The school permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites. However, where excessive use is suspected, and considered to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may be taken*
- The school will take appropriate action in the event of breaches of the social media policy. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the school will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the school will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the disciplinary policy.

Handling Abuse

When acting on behalf of the school, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity. If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, school users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken if you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed school protocols.

Tone

The tone of content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use Of Images

School use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with school's safety policy. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.

Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts

Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be

published. If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Monitoring posts about the school

As part of active social media engagement, it is considered good practice to proactively monitor the Internet for public postings about the school.

The school should effectively respond to social media comments made by others according to a defined policy or process.

10. BREACH OF THE POLICY

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with Oaks Park High School.

A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of Oaks Park High School or any illegal acts or acts that render Oaks Park High School liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Contracted providers of Oaks Park High School must inform the relevant school immediately of any breaches of this policy so that appropriate action can be taken to protect confidential information and limit the damage to the reputation of the school. Any action against breaches should be dealt according to ' internal disciplinary procedures.

APPENDIX A

Managing your personal use of Social Media:

“Nothing” on social media is truly private

Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school logo and/or branding on personal accounts

- Check your settings regularly and test your privacy
- Keep an eye on your digital footprint
- Keep your personal information private
- Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to
- When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
- If you want to criticise, do it politely.
- Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?
- Know how to report a problem

DO NOT ADD students or any Ex students to your personal social media accounts.

Managing school social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible

The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Appendix B

Requirements for creating social media sites on behalf of Oaks Park High School

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 Oaks Park High School.

Prior to creating a site, careful consideration must be given to the purposes for using social media and whether the overall investment is likely to be worthwhile for achieving the proposed pedagogical outcome.

The proposed audience and level of interactive engagement with the site, for example whether pupils, school staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the site, must be discussed with the school's IT Team or member of the IT Forum.

Staff members must consider how much time and effort they are willing 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.

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.

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.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When creating social media sites for children and young people and communicating with them using such sites, staff members must at all times be conscious of their responsibilities; staff must always act in the best interests of children and young people.

When creating sites for children and young people, staff members must be alert to the risks to which young people can be exposed. Young people's technical knowledge may far exceed their social skills and awareness – they may post sensitive personal information about themselves, treat online 'friends' as real friends, be targets for 'grooming' or become victims of cyberbullying.

If children and young people disclose information or display behaviour or are exposed to information or behaviour on these sites that raises safeguarding or other concerns, appropriate authorities must be informed immediately. Failure to do so could expose vulnerable young people to risk of harm.

Staff members must ensure that the sites they create or contribute to for work purposes conform to the *Good Practice Guidance for the Providers of Social Networking and Other*

User Interactive Services (Home Office Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, 2008).

Staff members must also ensure that the webspace they create on third party sites comply with the site owner's minimum age requirements (this is often set at 13 years). Staff members must also consider the ramifications and possibilities of children under the minimum age gaining access to the site.

Care must be taken to ensure that content is suitable for the target age group and contributors or 'friends' to the site are vetted.

Careful thought must be given to the profile of young people when considering creating sites for them. For example, the Internet may not be the best medium to communicate with vulnerable young people (or indeed any age group) receiving confidential and sensitive services from the school. It may not be possible to maintain confidentiality, particularly on third-party-hosted sites such as social networking sites, where privacy settings may not be strong enough to prevent breaches of confidentiality, however inadvertent. If in doubt, you must seek advice from your IT team /E Safety Coordinator.

Appendix C

Social Media Site Creation Approval Form

Use of social media on behalf of Oaks Park High School must be approved prior to setting up sites. Please Print and complete this form and forward it to the E-Safety Coordinator.

TEAM DETAIL			
Full Name:			
Department Name:			
Email attached to SM site:			
Name of Site:			
PURPOSE OF SETTING UP SOCIAL MEDIA SITE			
(please describe why you want to set up this site and the content of the site)			
<p>What are the aims you propose to achieve by setting up this site?</p> <p>What is the proposed content of the site?</p>			
PROPOSED AUDIENCE OF THE SITE		PROPOSED CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SITE	
Principal supervisor:			
Reserve supervisor:			
Proposed frequency of Normal monitoring (at least weekly):			
Proposed frequency of monitoring in holidays (at least weekly):			
<p>APPROVAL from relevant people must be obtained before the site can be created. Any site created will normally be expected to be generated in conjunction with the IT Forum to ensure that access information is properly recorded and privacy and security settings adopted in accordance with school policy The relevant managers must read this form and complete the information below before final approval can be given by the Headteacher.</p>			
Head of Department: I approve the aims and content of the proposed site.		IT forum: I approve the aims and content of the proposed site and the use of school brand and logo.	
Comments:		Comments:	
Name		Name	
Signature		Signature	
Headteacher			
Name			
Signature			
Date			

