

# **St Anne's Preparatory School**

## **Social Media Policy**

### **September 2016 (To be reviewed September 2017)**

#### **Policy Statement**

This policy is intended to clarify, and provide guidance for, the use of social media for staff in their professional role. This policy outlines standards expected of staff when using social media and is designed to protect individual members of staff, students and all users. This policy is supplementary to the E-Safety policy, Safeguarding policy and Staff Handbook.

#### **Rationale**

Social media plays a huge role in today's society. St Anne's School is aware that we must have an outward internet presence but remains conscious that the risks associated with improper use, and the damage that can be done to the reputation of the school in these instances, can have far reaching consequences. It is important that we balance this with our duties to the pupils, the community, the school's reputation, the school as a business and our legal responsibilities.

This policy aims to minimise any risks when using social media and ensure that the school, staff and pupils are well protected from such.

It is accepted that there is a difference between staff's school sanctioned use of social media and their personal use of social media and it must be clear to external users when information disseminated via social media channels is official school communication.

#### **Scope and Definitions**

Social media can be broadly described as "any communication using the internet" including, but not limited to, email, message boards, forums, social networks, mobile phone conversations, blogs any collaborative websites. It is ever evolving and as such any list will never be exhaustive.

#### **Use of social media in practice for staff Personal and Professional use**

- Staff should not have 1:1 communication with pupils through any forms of social media
- Any communication from pupils received via social media must be reported to the DSL and E-Safety Officer
- Members of staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts
- All email communication between staff, pupils and parents on school business must be made from an official school email account (any deviation from this in an emergency must at once be reported to a member of the SMT). Staff should not use personal email accounts or personal mobile phones to make contact with pupils and parents of the school, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances, such as school trips or away matches that have been given prior approval by the Head

- Staff should avoid posts or comments which refer to the specific, individual matters related to the school on any social media account
- Staff should not accept any current student of the school of any age, or any ex-student of the school under the age of 18, as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account
- Staff are instructed to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts. Reputational breaches by staff are dealt with via St Anne's Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

### **Guidelines for school sanctioned use**

- Remember social media use is an extension of your classroom. What is inappropriate in your classroom should be deemed inappropriate online
- If pupils are to be identified in a post they should be referred to by first name only
- Use of profanity or threatening language is forbidden
- Under no circumstances should negative comments be made about pupils, parents or other staff
- Personal information about current or past members of staff should not be posted online
- When using a hyperlink, be sure that the content is appropriate. Always view where the hyperlink takes you before you share it
- Always be aware of copyright law, if you think that an excerpt is too long to share, it probably is. If in doubt, link to the original piece.

### **Privacy**

As a staff member or volunteer, we respect your right to privacy and your right to express yourself. However, we must also respect, and diligently protect, the privacy of our colleagues, pupils, parents and other members of the school community. Privacy and confidentiality must be maintained in every possible way.

It is inappropriate to discuss student or family related information via social networking and public social media, texting, or online unless it is an approved medium and for a school related purpose, and you have written permission from the legal guardian for that particular information to be divulged.

Be extremely cautious in conversations with other members of the school community in social networking. It is extremely important to understand that privacy laws can be violated even if you do not share a person's name.

Honour the privacy rights of members of our school community past and present, and their families, by seeking their permission before writing about or displaying internal school happenings which might be considered to be a breach of their privacy and confidentiality.

Understand that on-line content is difficult, if not impossible, to retract once posted or sent. Be aware of the long memory of cyberspace – everything you say is likely to be indexed and stored forever, either via search engines or any other person references or copies your posts.

### **Use of social media in practice for parents**

- The school may monitor content and activity on social media platforms. However, it is not responsible for improper use of social media by pupils or parents
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to monitor their children's activities on social media
- If parents become aware of any inappropriate use of social media by pupils, they should contact the school so that we can work together to educate the children on safe and appropriate behaviour
- If parents become aware of any inappropriate use of social media by other parents or staff, they should contact the school so that steps can be taken to remedy the situation
- Do not use or engage in any abusive, threatening or bullying behaviour
- Under no circumstances should negative comments be made about pupils, staff or other parents
- If you are to post photographs and videos of your child, their work, or their sporting or other achievements, great care must be taken not to post close-up or readily recognizable photographs of other pupils
- If social media posts contain other parents or children, their express permission should be sought prior to the post being shared.