



## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The widespread availability and use of social networking applications bring opportunities to communicate with various groups in new ways. It is recognised that social networking has the potential to play an important part in many aspects of school life, including teaching and learning, external communications and continuing professional development. St. Saviour's School Ikoyi therefore encourages the responsible and professional use of the internet and social media to support educational delivery and professional development.

Whilst recognising the benefits social media brings, this policy sets out the principles designed to ensure that all staff members use social media responsibly so that the confidentiality of students, staff and the reputation of the school are safeguarded. It is essential that pupils, parents and the wider public have confidence in the school's decisions and services. In this context, staff members must always be conscious of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes and outlines the risks to users and the school, as well as the potential consequences of misuse of the internet and social media. St Saviour's School Ikoyi recognises the need to offer a protection for employees who may be harassed or victimised by other members of the school community due to their professional relationship with the school.

### 2. COVERAGE / APPLICATIONS

The policy applies to personal media platforms such as networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Googlechat, Instagram, TikTok), blogs, microblogs (e.g. Twitter), chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access, online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia) and content sharing sites (e.g. Flickr and YouTube). However, this list is not exhaustive and new on-line platforms are to be considered automatically covered. This policy also applies to online message boards/forums and comments under news items and other articles.

The internet is fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media therefore the principles set out in this policy must be followed closely, irrespective of the medium or platform. This policy equally applies to all employees including teacher trainees, any other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school and members of the St Saviour's School Ikoyi community.

### 3. POLICY AIMS

- To minimise the reputational, legal and governance risks to the school and its employees, arising from use of social media in both personal and professional capacities.
- To enable the safe use of social media for the purposes of communication and engagement.
- To ensure a consistent approach is applied across the school.



- To identify responsibilities of the school and employees in line with all other policies, particularly safeguarding and child protection.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES

In all communications, members of the school should:

- a) always be conscious of the need to keep personal and professional lives separate. Staff should not put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between their work and personal interests.
- b) not engage in activities involving social media which may bring St Saviour's school into disrepute.
- c) not represent their personal views as those of the school on any social medium.
- d) not discuss personal information about students, staff and any other professionals that they interact with as part of their job, on social media.
- e) follow safeguarding principles
- f) be open, honest, ethical and professional;
- g) use jargon-free, plain English in professional communication;
- h) be actioned within an agreed time frame.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff should be aware that there are a number of legal implications associated with the inappropriate use of social media. Liability can arise under the laws of:

- Defamation
  - Discrimination
  - Human Rights
  - Criminal harassment
  - Copyright
  - Contract
  - Protection from harassment
  - Data Protection
- For purposes of this policy the term 'public' is used to refer to those outside of the immediate school community (Employees, contractors and pupils) and includes (but not exclusively) parents/carers and ex-pupils.

#### User responsibilities

All users must be aware that as soon as a post is made online, it is no longer within the private sphere or in the control of the original poster. If an employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to disciplinary procedure. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed, further action may be taken to assist with the prosecution of the offenders. Any misuse of social media must be reported promptly to the safeguarding lead or Head teacher, whether carried out by pupils, parents/guardians or staff members.

#### 6. RISKS

The school recognises the risks associated with use of the internet and social media and regulates their use to ensure this does not damage the school, its staff and the people it serves.



Principals amongst these risks are:

- access to inappropriate material;
- civil or criminal action relating to breaches of legislation;
- cyber bullying by pupils/students;
- damage to the reputation of the school;
- disclosure of confidential information;
- inappropriate behaviour, criticism and complaints from external sources;
- loss or theft of personal data;
- offending behaviour toward staff members by other staff or pupils/students;
- other misuse by staff including inappropriate

personal use;

- social engineering attacks - i.e. the act of manipulating people into disclosing confidential material or carrying out certain actions;
- staff members openly identifying themselves as school personnel and making disparaging remarks about the school and/or its policies, about other staff members, pupils or other people associated with the school.
- damage to professional reputations with current and future employers.
- virus or other malware (malicious software) infection from infected sites.

## 7. REPORTING

Where staff have concerns about e-safety, these should be raised with the Data Protection Lead, Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead or Head Teacher as soon possible. Advice can also be sought from professional associations.

## 8. COMMUNICATION

Effective communications not only deliver the specific information required, but also enable us to demonstrate our values and ethos. Communication with parents/carers should always reinforce parental support and engagement.

Communications will seek to establish open and positive relationships with parents, whilst always ensuring that these relationships are professional. To this end, parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner using formal mediums of communication i.e. telephone, email, letter. Staff will not communicate with parents/carers or pupils via networking sites, personal devices or e-mail. Where there is a need to communicate directly with parents/carers (i.e. on school trips) staff will do so via the school office, have access to school provided equipment i.e. mobile phones or in extreme circumstances and with prior permission from the Head teacher, using a withheld number.

### **External communication with pupils**

Communication with pupils will take place face-to-face or via a staff member's school email address only. A staff member will not communicate with a pupil via their personal mobile phone or using personal email



addresses. All communication with pupils will be via a school email, parent e-mail or pre-arranged video conferencing supervised by a home adult.

## 9. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff members are strongly encouraged not to identify themselves as staff members of their school in their personal social media platforms. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with St Saviour's School Ikoyi and to safeguard the privacy of staff members. This does not include professional networking sites. Staff should also select carefully their social media profile picture as it is an extension to their professional image online.

Staff should not have contact through any social medium with any student from St Saviour's School Ikoyi or any other school. Staff are advised not to communicate on social media platforms with ex-students except via professional networking sites for professional reasons. Staff should decline 'friend requests' from students they receive in their personal social media accounts.

Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members, colleagues and other parties must not be discussed on their personal social media platforms. Photographs, videos or any of images of pupils or students should not be published on personal social media platforms.

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 unless pre-approved by school leadership.

Any misuse or abuse of social media must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head Teacher as soon as noticed, especially when concerning a pupil, parent/guardian or employee.

In cases where staff are also parents connected to the school, they are advised to use professional judgment (in reference to child protection and safeguarding policies) when communicating with children or young people also connected to the school community. Staff should only accept friend requests/communicate (when there is a genuine need) with others linked to the school community. This relationship should stand up to scrutiny from a professional perspective and should be appropriate. If a concern of safeguarding arises, this should be reported to the designated safeguarding lead in accordance with school policy

## 10. MONITORING

All school systems may be monitored so personal privacy cannot be assumed when using school hardware. St Saviour's School Ikoyi can monitor the usage of its own internet and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users (staff, contractors and pupils) when justifiable concerns have been raised re: electronic communication. This will be in line with school investigation procedures. St. Saviour's respects the privacy of its employees. However, postings made on a personal account may attain a wide readership and will therefore be considered public rather than private. Publicly accessible postings may be investigated if there is a suspected breach of this or related policies. When a public post



is reported concerning non-employee members of the school community, this will be investigated and responded to by the school. Further action may be taken to assist with the prosecution of the offenders

## 11. SCHOOL WEBSITE

We are responsible for maintaining the school website and staff are responsible for its content. There will be regular communication between the administrator and members of the school leadership team to monitor and update appropriate content for posting on the school website

## 12. USE OF IMAGES

Permissions are sought for images of children used in school produced materials, clear reference to online usage is made when permissions are requested. Staff must give permission for their images to be used in school produced materials accessible by members of the public (online or in print), whether controlled by the school or not. Photographs must be checked carefully to ensure that children who are on the restricted list are never shown.

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| Policy reviewed:                            | March (Lent) 2022             |
| Policy next to be reviewed:                 | March 2023                    |
| Member of staff responsible for the policy: | Mr Craig Heaton, Head Teacher |