

Student and Parent Social Media Policy

The College accepts that there are a number of benefits offered by a social media presence, to the College, its staff, parents and students. However there are undoubtedly some risks associated, including cyber bullying, safeguarding and reputation. The aim of this policy is to clarify what the College believes is safe and appropriate use of social media by both parents and students.

Parents, students and all members of the College community should be aware that any information shared through social media and networks (even on private pages, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) remains subject to data protection, intellectual property rights, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, UK libel and defamation laws, and Freedom of Information legislation. This should be considered prior to any comments or information being shared in any forum which may affect the College or any member of the College community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, E-Safety, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Sanctions, and the College Complaints Procedure.

The use of social media by students during College hours

The College's Acceptable Use Policy outlines the College's rules regarding the use of IT at College. These rules also apply to the use of social networking sites. The use of social networking sites is prohibited at College unless on the instruction of a teacher.

Inappropriate use of social media by students and parents

The College considers the following to be inappropriate uses of social media. This list is not exhaustive:

- Making derogatory or defamatory comments about the College, its staff or pupils;
- Making complaints about the College, its staff or pupils, the appropriate forum being our complaints procedures;
- Making allegations about the College, its staff or pupils, the appropriate forum being our complaints procedures;
- Making offensive or negative comments about the College, its staff or pupils;
- Posting violent, racist, homophobic or discriminatory comments.

Breaches of this Social Media Policy will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately by the College. Where there is a breach of this policy by a student, it will be dealt with under the College's Behaviour and Sanctions Policy. A breach by a parent will be dealt with as set out within this policy. Where the conduct of a student or parent is considered illegal, the College may report the matter to the police.

Inappropriate comments on social media by parents

The College has in place a comprehensive Complaints Procedure for Parents, which sets out how parents can voice any concerns, and how these will be dealt with. If a parent wishes to

complain, this is the procedure that should be followed. The College will not formally address complaints made in any other forum other than through the formal Complaints Procedure.

If it comes to the College's attention that a parent has, knowingly or inadvertently, breached this Social Media Policy by posting on social media what the College considers to be inappropriate, the College will in the first instance discuss the matter with the parent in order to resolve the matter informally. This will normally involve the parent being requested to remove the inappropriate post. If the parent refuses to do this, or continues to post in an inappropriate manner the College will consider taking further action, for example:-

- Write to the parent formally, giving a warning and requesting that the comment is removed immediately;
- If the inappropriate comment has been made on the College's website or online forum, the College may take action to restrict or block the parent's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the provider of any networking site to complain about the comment and request its removal; or
- Take legal advice or legal action where the comments posted are defamatory.

In cases of repeated or serious breaches of this Social Media Policy, the College has the right to consider the parent's actions as a breach of the Contract between the College and the parents, and either temporarily or permanently exclude the student from the College.

Cyber bullying

All cases of cyber-bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the College's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour and Sanctions Policies.

September 2018