

Social Media Policy

Introduction

The Internet provides a range of social networking and communication tools (hereafter referred to as 'social media') that allow users to interact with one another, for example from rediscovering friends on social networking sites such as *Facebook* to keeping up with other people's lives on *Twitter* and maintaining pages on Internet encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*.

The widespread availability and use of social media brings opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that St Andrew's Prep and its community are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, while recognising the benefits of these opportunities for communication, it is vital that this is balanced with protecting corporate and individual reputations. This policy sets out the principles that St Andrew's Prep pupils, staff and the wider community are expected to follow when using social media.

It is crucial that pupils, parents and the public at large have confidence in St Andrew's Prep's decisions and services. The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that all staff members use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of both pupils and staff and the reputation of St Andrew's Prep are safeguarded.

All members of the St Andrew's Prep community must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

This policy and associated guidance aims to protect and inform staff and advise senior management at St Andrew's Prep on how to deal with potentially inappropriate use of social media.

Scope

This policy applies to St Andrew's Prep staff, parents and the wider school community. (Hereafter collectively referred to social media 'users'). References to staff includes teachers, support staff, peripatetic staff, supply staff, governors, contractors and volunteers. References to pupils means all pupils registered at St Andrew's Prep.

It covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes, including sites hosted and maintained on behalf of the school.

This policy applies to personal webspace such as social networking sites (for example *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Snapchat*), blogs, microblogs such as *Twitter*; chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia*, social bookmarking sites such as *del.icio.us* and content sharing sites such as *flickr* and *YouTube*.

The Internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media - the principles set out in this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium. Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that this policy cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene standards outlined in this document. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise the headmaster of the justification for any action proposed or already taken.

Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Assist staff to work safely and responsibly with the Internet and other communication technologies and to monitor their own standards and practice
- Set clear expectations of behaviours and/or codes of practice relevant to social networking for educational, personal or recreational use
- Give a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that where appropriate, disciplinary or legal action will be taken
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations against adults or pupils
- Prevent adults abusing or misusing their position of trust

Related St Andrew's Prep policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following St Andrew's Prep policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Photography policy
- Mobile phone and devices policy
- ICT acceptable use policy
- Staff handbooks, rules and procedures
- Code of behaviour policy
- School rules
- Anti-bullying policy

Legal framework

St Andrew's Prep 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
- Data Protection Act 1998

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:

- Person-identifiable information, eg pupil and employee records protected by the Data Protection Act 1998
- St Andrew's Prep or Eastbourne College Charity business or corporate records containing organisationally or publicly sensitive information
- Any commercially sensitive information such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations
- 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
- Freedom of Information legislation
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Principles - be responsible and respectful

Users should be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional/school lives separate. They should never put themselves in a position where there is a conflict between St Andrew's Prep and their personal interests.

Users should not engage in activities involving social media which might bring St Andrew's Prep into disrepute.

Users should not represent their personal views as those of St Andrew's Prep on any social medium.

Users should not discuss personal information about pupils, other staff, St Andrew's Prep or the wider community on social media.

Users should not use social media and the Internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations or St Andrew's Prep.

Personal use of social media

Staff are not permitted to use social networking applications for personal use during work time in a manner which detracts from their effectiveness or productivity or in a manner where others observing their behaviour may draw that conclusion, unless permission has been given by the headmaster.

St Andrew's Prep e-mail addresses must not be used for setting up social media accounts or for communicating through such media. The only exception to this is for the professional networking sites such as, LinkedIn. This site should be operated in a manner where the email address is hidden from the profile page.

Staff and members of the wider community should not identify themselves as members of St Andrew's Prep in their personal web-space, unless specifically linked to an approved job role within the school community where it serves a purpose to professionally market the school. This is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with St Andrew's Prep and to safeguard the privacy of pupils, parents, staff members and the wider school community.

Staff must not have contact through any personal social medium with any pupil, unless the individuals concerned are family members. School email accounts must always be used by staff-pupil member and text messages only exchanged where there is a justifiable reason with regards to the exercising of duty of care (eg school trip).

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.

Staff members must decline 'friend requests' from pupils they receive in their personal social media accounts, until such time as the pupil ceases to be a pupil at the school and in addition, is over the age of 18.

Information that staff and members of the wider school community have access to as part of their involvement with St Andrew's Prep, including personal information, should 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, clothing with St Andrew's Prep branding or images identifying the school premises should not be published on personal or public web space without prior permission from St Andrew's Prep.

Staff must monitor who is allowed to view the content on their personal social media pages and understand how to restrict access to specific sets of people.

Staff and the wider St Andrew's Prep community should not edit 'open-access' online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia* on behalf of St Andrew's Prep or using a St Andrew's

Prep email address. Staff are discouraged from editing encyclopedias in a personal capacity.

Staff and the wider St Andrew's prep community should not post images or videos from school events on any social media site without the written permission of the director of marketing and communications (DMC). Importantly, the DMC holds an up-to-date register of a small number of pupils whose parents have withheld permission for images to be used in PR material.

Images or videos taken at school events by pupils or parents, when permission has been granted by the school, are for the sole and private use of that individual and their use must be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. However, such images or videos may be used by the St Andrew's Prep Marketing Department if written permission is granted by the individual who has taken them and they do not feature pupils whose parents have withheld permission for their images to be used for these purposes.

Staff and members of the wider St Andrew's Prep community 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. All users should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be careful about what is posted online. Home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information should not be revealed on social media.

Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment to St Andrew's Prep or detrimentally affects the school's reputation, disciplinary action may be taken.

Staff who run blogging/microblogging sites which have a professional and/or educational purpose should seek advice from the Director of Marketing and Communications and endorsement of views if there is any link to St Andrew's Prep or the wider charity. This advice must be sought before new blogging/microblogging sites are set up.

Using social media on behalf of St Andrew's Prep

The Eastbourne College Charity has full responsibility for the running of the school's official website, Facebook and other social accounts.

The creation and use of any other St Andrew's Prep branded social media accounts must be authorised by the Headmaster and Director of Marketing and Communications for the Eastbourne College Charity. (See Appendix A).

Under no circumstances may St Andrew's Prep logos, crests, typefaces or brands be used or published on any personal web space or on any online or offline medium without prior written consent from the Director of Marketing and Communications for

the Eastbourne College Charity. These are registered trademarks and the intellectual property of the charity.

Whilst parents, staff and members of the wider College community are encouraged to interact with official St Andrew's Prep social media accounts, they should do so with responsibility and respect.

Monitoring of Internet use

St Andrew's Prep monitors usage of its Internet, online services, online content and email services without prior notification or authorisation from users.

Users of St Andrew's Prep email and Internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using the College's ICT system.

Breaches of this policy

Any breach of this policy that leads to a breach of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of St Andrew's Prep or any illegal acts or acts that render St Andrew's Prep liable to third parties may result in disciplinary action or sanctions in line with the published policies for pupils and staff.

Appendix A - Requirements for creating social media sites on behalf of St Andrew's Prep

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 St Andrew's Prep.

Prior to creating an account or 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 outcome.

Once approval has been gained, the proposed audience and level of interactive engagement with the account/site, for example whether pupils, staff or members of the public will be able to contribute content to the site, must be discussed with the Director of Marketing and Communications for the Eastbourne College Charity. The DMC will consult with the Headmaster to this end.

If created, it is anticipated that most 'departmental' social media sites will have restricted access by a closed group of invited individuals and not be open to the general public. If a St Andrew's Prep department has news or information relevant to the general public

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this should be forwarded to the Marketing Department for posting on the St Andrew's Prep official Facebook or Instagram account.

Staff members must consider how much time and effort they are willing to commit to the proposed account/site. They should be aware that maintaining a site is not a one-off task, but involves a considerable time commitment, both in term time and the holidays.

The head of department of staff must take overall responsibility to ensure that enough resources are provided to keep the account/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.

Staff should discourage pupils from posting to the St Andrew's Prep Facebook page or tweeting/posting to potential St Andrew's Prep Twitter/Instagram account. These platforms are intended as marketing tools for the school and every effort must be made to ensure that a clear corporate identity and a high level of quality control is maintained at all times.

There must be a careful exit strategy and a clear plan from the outset about how long the account/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 account/site has achieved the proposed objectives.

The person i/c site must send a brief annual report to the DMC and Headmaster each summer term stating:

- Is the site still running?
- What is its current purpose and level of access?
- If it is not running, why not and have all necessary measures been made to close it down?
- Any other points of note.

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