Policy Owner	Bursar
Approving Body	Board of Governors
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Staff Social Media Policy

St. Aubyn's School

1 **Introduction**: The School recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Whatsapp, TikTok, LinkedIn, X, Instagram, Snapchat and all other internet postings including blogs, wikis and other interactive websites. It is also a valuable educational tool.

2 **Purpose**: This policy applies to the use of social media for School and your own personal purposes, whether during normal working hours or in your personal time. Its purpose is to help staff avoid the potential pitfalls of sharing information on social media sites and should be read in conjunction with the ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. This policy is designed for your protection.

3 **IT facilities**: The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using the School's IT facilities and equipment or your personal devices.

4 **Personal use**: The School permits the incidental use of the internet and social media so long as it is kept to a minimum and takes place substantially out of normal working hours. Use must not interfere with your work commitments (or those of others). Personal use is a privilege and not a right. If the School discovers that excessive periods of time have been spent on the internet provided by the School either in or outside working hours, disciplinary action may be taken and internet access may be withdrawn without notice at the discretion of the Head.

5 **Guiding principles**: Staff are required to behave responsibly at all times and adhere to the following principles:

6 Members of staff should make sure their use of social media, either for work or personal purposes, is appropriate at all times.

You should not be "Friends" with, "Followers" of, or connect with pupils on any social media, including personal accounts or other interactive network. It would be considered inappropriate to connect with pupils on a personal account. Depending on the circumstances, it may also be inappropriate to connect with parents, guardians or carers.

You must not publish anything which could identify pupils, parents or guardians on any personal social media account, personal webpage or similar platform. This includes photos, videos, or other materials such as pupil work.

You must be mindful of how you present yourself and the School on such media. Staff are entitled to a social life like anyone else. However, the extra-curricular life of an employee at the School has professional consequences and this must be considered at all times when sharing personal data.

You should always represent your own views and must not allude to other people's personal views in your internet posts.

When writing an internet post, you should consider whether the contents would be more appropriate in a private message. While you may have strict privacy controls in place, information could still be shared by others. It is always sensible to consider that any information posted may not remain private.

You should protect your privacy and that of others by omitting personal data from internet posts such as names, email addresses, home or work addresses, phone numbers or other personal data.

You should familiarise yourself with the privacy settings of any social media you use and ensure that public access is restricted. If you are not clear about how to restrict access, you should regard all your information as publicly available and behave accordingly.

You must not post anything that may offend, insult or humiliate others, particularly on the basis of their sex, age, race, colour, national origin, religion, or belief, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

You must not post anything that could be interpreted as threatening, intimidating or abusive. Offensive posts or messages may be construed as cyber-bullying.

You must not post disparaging or derogatory remarks about the School or its Governors, staff, volunteers, pupils or parents, guardians or carers.

You must not post anything that could be interpreted as glorifying or supporting terrorism, extremism or organisations promoting terrorist or extremist views, or encouraging others to do so.

You must not use social media in a way which could constitute a breach of any policies.

The school has guidelines for staff on appropriate security settings for Facebook accounts (see appendix 1).

7 **Removing postings**: You may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. If you fail to remove postings, this could result in disciplinary action.

8 **Breach**: A breach of this policy may be treated as misconduct and could result in disciplinary action including in serious cases, dismissal.

9 **Monitoring**: The School regularly monitors the use of the internet, social media and email systems to check that the use is in accordance with this policy. Please see the Staff IT Acceptable Use Policy for further information on monitoring. If it is discovered that any of the systems are being abused and / or that the terms of this policy are being infringed, disciplinary action may be taken which could result in your dismissal.

10 **School social media accounts**

11 The school has an official Facebook/Twitter account, managed by the school's Marketing and Admissions Registrar. Staff members who have not been authorised to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, the account.

12 The school has guidelines for what may and must not be posted on its social media accounts. Those who are authorised to manage, or post to, the account must make sure they abide by these guidelines at all times.

Appendix 1: Facebook guidance for staff

Do not accept friend requests from pupils on social media

Rules for school staff on Facebook

1. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if you don't, ensure that the image is professional
2. Check your privacy settings regularly
3. Be careful about tagging other staff members in images or posts
4. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be just as happy showing your pupils
5. Don't use social media sites during school hours
6. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, our school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there
7. Don't associate yourself with the school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)
8. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts. Anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile number) is able to find you using this information
9. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone. The app recognises WiFi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same WiFi connection (such as parents or pupils)

Check your privacy settings

- Change the visibility of your posts and photos to **'Friends only'**, rather than 'Friends of friends'. Otherwise, pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they're friends with anybody on your contacts list
- Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos** – go to bit.ly/2MdQXMN to find out how to limit the visibility of previous posts
- The public may still be able to see posts you've **'liked'**, even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster
- **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public
- Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people can't **search for you by name** – go to bit.ly/2zMdVht to find out how to do this
- Remember that **some information is always public**: your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender

What to do if …

A pupil adds you on social media

- In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile
- Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture
- If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents. If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages
- Notify the senior leadership team about what's happening

A parent adds you on social media

- It is at your discretion whether to respond. Bear in mind that:
    - Responding to 1 parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other teachers at the school
    - Pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in
- If you wish to decline the offer or ignore the message, consider drafting a stock response to let the parent know that you're doing so

You're being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

- **Do not** retaliate or respond in any way
- Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred
- Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it
- If the perpetrator is a current pupil or staff member, our mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents
- If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address any reasonable concerns or complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material
- If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a senior leader should consider contacting the police