



KING WILLIAM'S COLLEGE

King William's College & The Buchan School

Social Media Policy

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Stuart Corrie

Deputy Head Pastoral

Introduction

For the purposes of this document, Social Media is defined as any category of online media that supports groups and individuals communicating, participating, sharing, networking and bookmarking online. Common social media platforms include, but are not limited to: online social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter; blogs, podcasts and discussion forums; RSS feeds and content sharing sites such as Instagram and YouTube.

The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is integral to 21st century learning. To this aim, King Williams College has introduced the following policy to provide direction for all staff when participating in online social media activities particularly, but not exclusively, during the school working day.

The purpose of this policy is to help protect both the school and the personal interests of staff. The aims of this document are:

- To provide clarity to staff on the use of social media tools when acting independently or as a representative of King William's College
- To ensure that the reputation of King William's College is not brought into disrepute
- To ensure that internet users are able to distinguish between official school information and the personal opinions of staff.

1. General Social Media use

- 1.1 Many staff members already use social media, particularly interactive and collaborative websites, both in a personal and professional capacity. Rather than try to restrict this activity, King William's College aims to provide guidance which will enable staff to interact online in a way that is credible, consistent, transparent and relevant.
- 1.2 Posts made through personal accounts may breach this policy if they bring the organisation into disrepute. This includes situations when an individual could be identifiable as a King William's College employee whilst using social networking tools, or occasions when commenting on school related matters in a public forum.
- 1.3 If a staff member does identify themselves as an employee of this organisation then they should ensure that their profile and related content is consistent with the image they wish to present to colleagues and what the school would deem appropriate. Staff should not operate online in a way which could call into question their position as a professional.
- 1.4 Staff should not post content that may attract negative attention and should be mindful of the way they express themselves and of the risk that comments may be taken out of context.
- 1.5 Staff may not upload images containing students into any social media forum, except with the prior approval of the SMT to officially sanctioned school forums.
- 1.6 Staff should not engage in discussion/debate or offer information to the media in a representative role. Staff must at all times refer enquiries from the media to the Principal.
- 1.7 Staff should not, at any point, include anything that could be considered offensive or discriminatory to any individual, or deemed as bullying or harassment of any individual. Examples include but are not limited to:

- 1.7.1 Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief
- 1.7.2 Using social media to bully another individual or make comments likely to be perceived as of a bullying nature
- 1.7.3 Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

2. Personal use of social media at work

- 2.1. Staff are not allowed to access social media websites from the school's computers or devices at any time during the school working day. Whilst it is understood that staff may wish to use their own devices to access such media whilst at school, staff must limit their use to non-contact time (such as breaks, lunch and after school).
- 2.2. If it is believed that a member of staff has engaged in any activity in breach of this policy and the school contract, then an investigation may be instigated which could result in disciplinary action.

3. Use of social media and the Internet for work purposes

In specific circumstances it may be appropriate for a member of staff to use social media as part of their work. There must, however, be a strong pedagogical reason for creating official media sites to communicate with pupils or others. Such sites should only be created with the written approval of the Principal, Vice-Principal or their designated representative. In such circumstances the same safeguards must be adhered to as would be expected with any other form of communication about the School in the public domain. Any communications made in a professional capacity through social media must not either knowingly or recklessly:

- 3.1. Bring the school into disrepute
- 3.2. Breach confidentiality
- 3.3. Breach copyright
- 3.4. Breach data protection legislation
- 3.5. Communicate inaccurate or inappropriate information to students, staff or parents. (Social media is not considered to be an appropriate forum to communicate official information, with the exception of officially approved groups (such as Tour group pages) or the official school sites.
- 3.6. Involve interaction with pupils via social media/Internet sites without appropriate authorisation.
- 3.7. Involve interaction with any ex-student who is under the age of 18 (staff should exercise caution in interacting with any ex-pupils regardless of age)

The above is a non-exhaustive list and is intended to provide some examples of what we consider to be inappropriate. If in any doubt, staff should consult with their line manager or Head of Department.

4. Use of social media in your personal life

We recognise that many members of staff make use of social media in a personal capacity. Please therefore bear in mind the following guidelines:

- 4.1. Any communications made in a personal capacity through social media must not bring the School into disrepute. Staff should avoid distribution of images or other media that may create a negative impression or cast doubt on the professionalism of the individual or the school.
- 4.2. Staff may identify that they work for a school, but their online profile or name (such as the name of a blog or a twitter account name), or the name of a page or website, must not contain the School's name as part of the title, with the exception of officially approved groups.
- 4.3. If discussing work on social media (for example, giving opinions on a subject specialism etc), where appropriate a disclaimer should include a statement along the lines of: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the School".
- 4.4. Whilst close family ties or other circumstances will create exceptions, it is strongly advised to avoid online interaction with any student who is under the age of 18, (staff should exercise extreme caution in interacting with any ex-pupils regardless of age).
- 4.5. Consider the language used by contacts in association with the member of staff's name.
- 4.6. Members of staff are strongly advised to ensure privacy settings are set to their strictest levels.

5. Disciplinary action over social media use

All staff members are required to adhere to this policy. Staff should note that any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing damage to the reputation of the School, may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct.

6. LINKED POLICIES

- **Acceptable Use Policy – Staff**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Common Room Code of Conduct**
- **E-Safety Policy**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Safer Recruitment Policy**
- **Whistleblowing Procedure**