



Social Media Policy

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1. Introduction

The use of social media continues to increase and is readily available. This policy is designed to safeguard the interests of both staff and Reigate Grammar School Riyadh (RGSR). It provides directions on interacting with those directly related to the school. The school reserves the right to amend the policy from time to time.

2. Principles

For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. A social networking site is any website which enables its users to create profiles, form relationships and share information with other users. It also includes sites which have online discussion forums, chatrooms, media posting sites and any other social space online. Examples of such websites are Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video/image-sharing websites such as YouTube. Staff should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Staff should follow these guidelines in relation to any type of social media that they use.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during normal working hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using the school's IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff, or any other IT equipment.

3. Relationship with other School Policies

If the content of an internet post breaches any of our policies in another forum it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, staff are prohibited from any use of social media which would:

- Breach the school's obligations with regard to confidentiality;
- Breach the school's disciplinary rules;
- Defame or disparage the school or our affiliates, parents, staff, student, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders;
- Harass or bully other staff in any way;
- Unlawfully discriminate against other staff or third parties;
- Disclose personal information about a colleague, student or parent;
- Breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, using social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

4. Responsible use of social media

Staff must be aware that their role comes with particular responsibilities, and they must adhere to the school's strict approach to social media.

Comments made online can be permanent and so staff must be extremely cautious about what they say as it can be harder to retract. Staff must also be aware of the particular risks to internet security that social media presents and also take any extra measures necessary not to allow any of their actions on social media sites to create vulnerability to any school systems.

Staff are also strongly advised to think very carefully before accepting or initiating 'friend' requests on any personal social network sites from parents of students.

4.1 Staff must:

- Ensure that wherever possible their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that students and parents cannot access information relating to their personal lives;

- Seek approval from the Head of School before they speak about or make any comments on behalf of the school on the internet or through any social networking site;
- Report immediately to the Head of School if they see any information on the internet or on social networking sites that disparages or reflects poorly on the school;
- Immediately remove any internet postings which are deemed by the school to constitute a breach of this or any other school policy;
- Carefully evaluate if someone would reasonably think that a particular posting puts their position as a teacher or member of school staff at risk before making the post;
- Post only what they want the public at large to see.

4.2 Staff must not, unless authorised to do so:

- Set up a site/page which includes the school's name, logo or image;
- Provide references for other individuals on social or professional networking sites. References whether positive or negative can be attributed to the school and create legal liability for both the author of the reference and the school;
- Post or publish on the internet or on any social networking site any reference to their colleagues, parents or students at the school;
- Discuss students or colleagues on the internet or on any social networking site;
- Use social networking sites as part of the educational process e.g. As a way of reminding students about homework and deadlines;
- Post images that include students on the internet or on any social networking site;
- Initiate friendships or accept requests on any personal social network sites with former students.

4.3 Staff must not:

- Publicly criticise the school or staff on the internet or on any social networking site;
- Initiate friendships or accept requests on any personal social network sites with current students;
- Use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libelous on the internet or on any social networking site.

5. Personal Use of Social Media

We recognise that staff may work long hours and may occasionally wish to access social media for personal activities at the school or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. Such occasional use is permitted so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with normal work responsibilities. Excessive use of social media during working hours that interrupts staff productivity will be subject to disciplinary action.

Staff are not permitted to publish their work email address in any personal use of social media.

6. The Monitoring of Social Media

As detailed in RGSR Staff ICT Acceptable Use Policy, the contents of our IT resources and communications systems are our property. Therefore, staff should have no expectation of confidentiality or privacy when using or accessing the school's communication tools. The school reserves the right to monitor and review logs that are maintained in order to ensure compliance with school policies. All users agree to such monitoring and reviewing of internet access prior to being given access to the school's IT systems.

7. Use of social media in the recruitment process

The school reserves the right to check prospective employees' online media activities prior to making and confirming an offer.

8. Social media and disciplinary action

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach was committed during working hours, and regardless of whether the school's equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any member of staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with any investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

Staff may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Any misuse or suspected misuse of social media should be reported to the Head of School. Suspected issues related to child protection should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

9. Social Media and the termination of employment

If a member of staff's employment with RGSR should end, for whatever reason, any personal profiles on social networking sites that imply continued connection with the school should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that you are no longer employed or associated with RGSR.