TRINITY
SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Trinity School (hereafter referred to as 'the school') recognises that digital and social media are widely used by pupils, teachers, and parents in both a personal and professional capacity. The school recognises the potential benefits which the use of social media can have on teaching and learning, is aware that social media can both enhance and harm the school's reputation and understands that the inappropriate use of social media carries with it both personal and professional risks.

Anyone using social media should be aware that once something is posted online in the digital realm, it has a persistence that is not like something that is said. It is replicable and searchable, and you cannot be sure who your audience is or will be. Once something is posted online, its effects are often magnified and can be mirrored out of context.

> Anyone using social media must remember that, when making a post, they have not only their own reputation to consider but also that of others and that of the school. Every member of the community must take responsibility for their own actions when online and is expected to demonstrate high levels of professionalism and good judgement at all times.

This policy seeks to provide guidelines which ensure that staff and pupils use social media responsibly and in a way which maximises educational benefits to all social media users. The policy complements, and should be read in conjunction with, the Staff Code of Conduct and the ICT Acceptable Use Policy (Staff).

2. Definition and Scope

For the purposes of this policy, social media shall be defined as:

'Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.'

This policy:
- Applies to everyone who works for, with or at the school, including external contractors providing services on behalf of the school, trainee teachers and apprentices, parents, and volunteers.
- Covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official School purposes.
- Applies to the use of all public social media such as
  - Social networking sites (e.g., *Facebook*)
  - Blogs and microblogs (e.g., *X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, TikTok)*,

- Chatrooms, forums, podcasts, unrestricted access online encyclopaedias (e.g., *Wikipedia*),
- Social bookmarking sites (e.g., *del.icio.us*)
- Content sharing sites (e.g., *flickr* and *YouTube*),
- 'Secure platforms,' where information is not accessible to the public and information is sent directly to a specific group of people (e.g., Ludus, MyMaths, TEAMs, Onenote and other closed educational tools).

The internet and social media are continually and rapidly evolving, and it is impossible to cover all circumstances of use or emerging media. This policy does not seek to list in minute detail all potential social media platforms but does aim to establish broad principles of use, which must be adhered to by everyone in the Trinity community.

3. **Professional use of social media**

The school maintains a presence on a variety of public and secure social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram) and recognises that these sites can provide highly effective additional channels of communication with students, teachers, parents, carers, past pupils, friends of the school and the wider community. Social media sites allow information and news about the school to be collated and publicised and staff use social media to enhance pupils' teaching and learning in their subject and professional networking.

When using social media in a professional capacity:
- Social media should only be used as a professional communication tool and all posts must show Trinity in a positive light. Accuracy of content, spelling and grammar is of paramount importance and posts should be written without ambiguity or any rhetorical device (such as sarcasm) which might be misinterpreted. Personal views should not be expressed when communicating School matters.
- Posts should only be used as a one-way channel for distributing news and dialogue should never be entered into. If any student engages a member of staff in direct message conversation using social media, this should be reported to the Senior Deputy Head and the conversation should be continued in person.
- Images of students may only be posted on social media sites approved by the Senior Deputy Head. The only two public social media sites to which pupil images may be posted are X, Instagram and YouTube.
- The school occasionally streams events live. In this instance the teacher in charge should ensure that all the students understand it is a live stream and that all the students involved do not have any restrictions on them being filmed.

Posting to X:
- Before a department starts using X, express permission to do so must be given by the Senior Deputy Head, who will inform the Marketing Department of the new account.
- Student images may only be posted to X if their use is not restricted by their parents or the school. Images posted to X should be chosen carefully and should show the school in the best possible light. If unsure of the suitability of an image, the Senior Deputy Head should be consulted. Only first names should be used in captions and no students should be tagged in an image.
- All departmental X accounts should be in the name of the department and not an individual within that department. A suitable naming convention would be @TrinitySch_____. For example, @TrinitySchRugby.

- All X accounts should be password protected and passwords should never be written down. A combination of upper- and lower-case characters should be combined with numerals. The potential for hi-jacked accounts being misused in such a way as to bring the school into disrepute is significant and responsibility for account security lies with the member of staff who controls it. This information should never be given to students.
- Care should be taken when retweeting, being followed or following others as it could be seen as you are recommending or condoning them, including things they previously may have said.

Posting to YouTube or other video sharing websites
- Video content must not be uploaded to public hosting services (e.g., YouTube) without explicit permission from the Senior Deputy Head.

Posting to Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, or other comparable sites
- Apart from The Trinity Parents' Association and the School's Marketing Department, no member of staff who works for, at or with the school may open a Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram etc. account which purports to represent the school in any capacity.

Posting to Weblogs
- 'Blogs' can be a very convenient method by which to disseminate information to parents while on school trips. They can also be a very engaging format for pupil-teacher dialogue and represent an opportunity for teachers to share their thoughts on subject-specific ideas and concepts.
- Members of staff may create a blog for the purpose of keeping parents informed of events on a school trip, but it must be 'closed' (i.e., parents of those pupils on the trip need a password to access it) and permission to do so must be given by the Director of Co-curricular.
- No member of staff may create a personal blog which purports to represent the school and any blog used in a private capacity must not make mention of the school or the activities of pupils or colleagues at the school.

Posting to external domains
- No member of staff or pupil may create a private website which purports to represent the school or the activities of anyone related to the school. All School related activities eg societies and academic, sporting, or cultural endeavour must be communicated via official channels only i.e., the school's website, approved X feeds of the Marketing Department's Facebook account.

4. Personal use of social media

Members of staff may, of course, maintain a personal social media presence outside school but it essential that a distinct separation exists between a member of staff's personal and professional online presence. Those who work in the education profession occupy an almost unique professional position due to their work with children and the moral credibility they must maintain and there have been cases where reputation and career prospects have suffered profound consequences because of poor judgement in the use of social media.

Staff should be aware that even when a strict separation between personal and professional online presence is adhered to, it remains straightforward for students, colleagues, parents, governors, past pupils, journalists, future employers etc. to connect staff in schools with 'private' social media presences. Staff should be aware that following on from KCSIE 2022, schools are required to complete online checks of staff digital presence and that this can impact future employment.

When using social media in a personal capacity:

- Staff members must not have contact, through any personal social medium, with any student.
- Staff members should not have social media contact with ex-students until at least one year after the student has left the school.
- Staff members should not put themselves in a position where extreme political, religious, or philosophical views expressed via social media conflict with those of the school. Even if separation of professional and private lives has been maintained, expressing such views may make their position at the school untenable.
- Staff members should not use social media to document or distribute evidence of activities in their private lives that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Staff members must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, or the school.
- Personal public social media accounts should not be used to share school or student information.
- Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they set the privacy levels of their personal sites to as high a level as possible and to opt out of public listings on social networking sites to protect their own privacy.
- Some staff members are also parents. Where this is the case, you may be invited to join 'groups' on social media (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, etc). The school's strong advice is for staff members is to not join these groups and that staff are particularly mindful of their online presence, what they share, etc. Additional guidance for staff who are parents is available.

All teaching and support staff are strongly advised to read the Staff Code of Conduct for further information relating to the acceptable use of IT at the School.

5. Social Media as a teaching tool

Research indicates that the most useful social media for supporting teaching and learning are those which enable collaborative work and research e.g., wikis, forums, blogs, group-writing, and scrapbook tools. When using these forms of social media to enhance teaching and learning, staff must manage and oversee student activity extremely carefully. It is expected that where students can communicate online via posts or chatting the supervising member of staff will check content regularly or to avoid misuse. Certain sites are recommended to staff for the purposes of this sort of activity (e.g., Teams, OneNote, etc.). If staff are using non-core websites no identifying student data must be entered or registered without agreement from the Director of Digital Strategy. Teaching staff are able and encouraged to use Jamf to ensure that students cannot navigate beyond the specific page/app etc to protect students.

The Use of X/Instagram

The use of X/Instagram has become increasingly popular within the school and feedback from practitioners highlights the following key benefits of departmental X feeds:

- Stretch: these provide an excellent vehicle to promote engagement in the subject beyond the confines of the classroom and syllabus by directing students towards appropriate wider reading opportunities, lectures, video links and television programmes etc. This is particularly useful to support G&T students, as well as those who may be interested in pursuing a subject at A Level or in Higher Education.
- Professional Development: these enable teachers to build networks with other departments to share innovative ideas, links, and resources to feed into planning.

- Reputational gains: An active and professionally managed feed has the potential to raise the profile of both the department and the school and provide less obvious benefits, such as increasing the number of applicants for jobs.

6. Breaches of the policy

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with the school's <u>Disciplinary Policy</u>. A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of the school or any illegal acts or acts that render the school liable to third parties will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the severity of the breach.

Any questions on the use of social media should be directed to the Senior Deputy Head or Director of Digital Strategy and breaches or suspected breaches of the policy should be reported to the Senior Deputy Head.

7. Legal framework

The school is committed to ensuring that all staff members provide confidential services that meet the highest standards. All individuals working on behalf of Trinity are bound by a legal duty of confidentiality and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media could constitute a breach of several laws and professional codes of conduct.

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