



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Autumn 2021

This policy will be reviewed at least annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance or procedure



St Martin's School



Expectations

- The expectations' regarding safe and responsible use of social media applies to all members of the Whinless Down Academy community.
- The term social media may include (but is not limited to): blogs; wikis; social networking sites; forums; bulletin boards; online gaming; apps; video/photo sharing sites; chatrooms and instant messenger.
- All members of the WDAT community are expected to engage in social media in a positive, safe and responsible manner. They are advised not to publish specific and detailed private thoughts, concerns, pictures or messages on any social media services, especially content that may be considered threatening, hurtful or defamatory to others.
- The school will control learner and staff access to social media whilst using setting provided devices and systems on site. The use of social media during setting hours for personal use is not permitted, except during break and lunch times in designated areas. Inappropriate or excessive use of social media during setting hours or whilst using setting devices may result in disciplinary or legal action and/or removal of internet facilities.
- Concerns regarding the online conduct of any member of staff on social media, should be reported to the DSL/Head of School and will be managed in accordance with our anti-bullying, allegations against staff, behaviour and child protection policies.

Staff Personal Use of Social Media

- The safe and responsible use of social networking, social media and personal publishing sites will be discussed with all members of staff as part of staff induction and will be revisited and communicated via regular staff training opportunities.
- Safe and professional behaviour will be outlined for all members of staff (including volunteers) as part of our code of conduct and acceptable use policy.
- All members of staff are advised that their online conduct on social media can have an impact on their role and reputation within the setting. Civil, legal or disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to bring the profession or institution into disrepute, or if something is felt to have undermined confidence in their professional abilities.
- All members of staff are advised to safeguard themselves and their privacy when using social media sites. Advice will be provided to staff via staff training and by sharing appropriate guidance and resources on a regular basis. This will include (but is not limited to):
 - Setting the privacy levels of their personal sites.
 - Being aware of location sharing services.
 - Opting out of public listings on social networking sites.
 - Logging out of accounts after use.
 - Keeping passwords safe and confidential.

- Ensuring staff do not represent their personal views as that of the setting.
- Members of staff are encouraged not to identify themselves as employees of WDAT on their personal social networking accounts; this is to prevent information on these sites from being linked with the setting, and to safeguard the privacy of staff members.
- All members of staff are encouraged to carefully consider the information, including text and images, they share and post online and to ensure that their social media use is compatible with their professional role and is in accordance our policies and the wider professional and legal framework.
- Information and content that staff members have access to as part of their employment, including photos and personal information about learners and their family members or colleagues will not be shared or discussed on social media sites.
- Members of staff will notify the Leadership Team immediately if they consider that any content shared on social media sites conflicts with their role.
- All members of staff are advised not to communicate with or add as 'friends' any current or past learners or their family members via any personal social media sites, applications or profiles.
- Staff will not use personal social media accounts to contact learners or parents, nor should any contact be accepted, except in circumstance whereby prior approval has been given by the Head of School and/or Executive Headteacher.
- Any pre-existing relationships or exceptions which compromise this requirement will be disclosed on the Disclosure of Social Media Friends document and/or discussed with Headteacher.
- Any communication from learners and parents received on personal social media accounts will be reported to their line manager, DSL or Headteacher.

Learners Personal Use of Social Media

- Safe and appropriate use of social media will be taught to learners as part of an embedded and progressive education approach, via age appropriate sites and resources.
- We are aware that many popular social media sites state that they are not for children under the age of 13, therefore we will not create accounts specifically for learners under this age.
- DSL will respond to online safety concerns in line with Child Protection Policy.
- Any concerns regarding learners use of social media will be dealt with in accordance with existing policies, including anti-bullying and behaviour. Concerns will be shared with parents/carers as appropriate, particularly when concerning underage use of social media sites, games or tools.
- Learners will be advised:
 - To consider the benefits and risks of sharing personal details on social media sites which could identify them and/or their location.

- To only approve and invite known friends on social media sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.
- Not to meet any online friends without a parent/carer or other responsible adult's permission and only when a trusted adult is present.
- To use safe passwords.
- To use social media sites which are appropriate for their age and abilities.
- How to block and report unwanted communications.
- How to report concerns both within the setting and externally.

Official Use of Social Media

W DAT official social media channels are:

- Priory Fields School: closed group
 - St Martin's School, Dover: closed group
 - Friends of Vale View: closed group
- The official use of social media sites only takes place with clear educational or community engagement objectives, with specific intended outcomes.
 - The official use of social media as a communication tool has been formally risk assessed and approved by the Executive Headteacher.
 - Leadership staff have access to account information and login details for our social media channels, in case of emergency, such as staff absence.
 - Official social media channels have been set up as distinct and dedicated social media sites or accounts for educational or engagement purposes only.
 - We strongly recommend that staff using their own personal Facebook account have their settings set to Friends only. Those that are Admins, must have their settings set to Friends only.
 - Staff are asked not to respond to private social media messages from parents and/or children using their personal accounts.
 - Public communications on behalf of the setting will, where appropriate and possible, be read and agreed by at least one other colleague.
 - Official social media use will be conducted in line with existing policies, including: anti-bullying, image/camera use, data protection, confidentiality and child protection. All communication on official social media platforms will be clear, transparent and open to scrutiny.
 - Parents/carers and learners will be informed of any official social media use, along with expectations for safe use and action taken to safeguard the community.
 - Only social media tools Facebook have been risk assessed and approved as suitable for educational purposes will be used.
 - Parents and carers will be informed of any official social media use with learners; written parental consent will be obtained, as required.
 - We will ensure that any official social media use does not exclude members of the community who are unable or unwilling to use social media channels.

Staff expectations

- Members of staff who follow and/or like our official social media channels will be advised to use dedicated professional accounts, where possible, to avoid blurring professional boundaries.
- If members of staff are participating in online social media activity as part of their capacity as an employee of the setting, they will:
 - Sign our social media acceptable use policy.
 - Always be professional and aware they are an ambassador for the setting.
 - Always be responsible, credible, fair and honest, and consider how the information being published could be perceived or shared.
 - Always act within the legal frameworks they would adhere to within the workplace, including: libel, defamation, confidentiality, copyright, data protection and equalities laws.
 - Ensure that they have appropriate consent before sharing images on the official social media channel.
 - Not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the setting, unless they are authorised to do so.
 - Not engage with any direct or private messaging with current, or past, learners, parents and carers.
 - Inform their line manager, the DSL and/or the Head of School of any concerns, such as criticism, inappropriate content or contact from learners and/or parents. .