



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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1 SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

Social media presents opportunities for both schools and individuals to communicate with new and existing audiences. Whilst recognising the benefits of social media, this policy sets out the expectations that all RPS staff, pupils and parents are expected to follow when using personal or school sanctioned accounts. This will help the School to embrace these new technologies, whilst at the same time prioritising the safeguarding of children.

2 PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The School endeavours to adopt a common-sense pragmatic approach to the use of social media.
- 2.2 Everyone should be aware of their digital footprint and how they can protect their identity online.
- 2.3 As a community we need to ensure that communication is polite and presents the school in a positive light.
- 2.4 It is essential that our top priority remains the safeguarding of children.

3 EXPECTATIONS

- 3.1 For all
 - 3.1.1 Content should not be published by staff, pupils or parents, on any social network, personal or school sanctioned, that could bring the School into disrepute.
- 3.2 Social Media and Education
 - 3.2.1 Staff members, who wish to use social media accounts for educational purposes, should ensure these have been authorised by the Principal.
 - 3.2.2 Staff who use Social Media must only use them to communicate with a Group. For example, a teacher might set up a group for a class on Facebook or Twitter.



3.3 Use of Pupil Images on Social Media

3.3.1 When using school sanctioned accounts, staff should ensure they only publish images when parental permission has been granted. Pupil surnames should not be included in any comments, messages or posts.

3.3.2 The School will minimise the risk to children of putting images of pupils on Social Media through the following steps:

- (a) Staff should endeavour to avoid posting full face photos of happy smiling pupils (because full face photos can be cropped more easily onto other images).
- (b) Instead staff should endeavour to take photos of pupils from the side or from an angle, heads down, or from a distance, or slightly blurred as if an action shot at sport. In this way schools can still display images of happy and industrious pupils.
- (c) Staff should avoid displaying images of young children in swimwear etc.
- (d) Staff must not use full names of pupils or specify the year group.
- (e) The principle of **“Faces without Names; Names without Faces”** should apply.
- (f) Staff may take photographs of pupils for use on social media so long as they don't store them on their phones or devices – i.e. the image must be deleted within 24 hours and must not be distributed to anyone outside the organisation.

3.4 Social Media and Communication between Staff and Pupils:

3.4.1 With the exception of those staff who have family who are in the school, all staff must not enter into personal communications with pupils (i.e. 'direct message' pupils) using social media accounts. The following is not a fully comprehensive list (because the nature of social media is that new networks and platforms come in and out of fashion); however, staff should apply these principles to other social media networks and platforms:

- (a) Staff should not be 'friends' with pupils on Facebook;
- (b) Staff should not follow individual pupils on Twitter;
- (c) Staff should not use Snapchat with pupils;



(d) Staff should not WhatsApp Pupils;

3.4.2 The only acceptable channels of personal communication between staff and pupils are those set up by the School, where the school reserves the right to monitor communication (and thus protect staff from allegations)

3.5 Parent & Pupil Expectations of Social Media Use

3.5.1 Parents and pupils in all grade levels using any social media forum must, at all times, demonstrate respect for the members of the school community, including all pupils and personnel.

3.5.2 Parents and pupils must not breach confidentiality, defame the school/its staff or make threats to any person in the school community;

3.5.3 Instances of proven and intentional breach of the above will result in sanctions that may include suspension from the school or refusal to re-enrol the pupil for the next academic year (as per the KHDA contract); staff members also have the right to inform the police where they have been subjected to public defamation of character.

3.6 Appropriate Age for Social Media Accounts

3.6.1 In accordance with the terms and conditions of many popular social networks (e.g. Facebook), the School recommends that no children, under the age of 13, should have publicly visible social media accounts

4 THE SCHOOL NETWORK – WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA SITES ARE ACCESSIBLE.

4.1 Parents should be aware that smartphones are not permissible at RPS because:

4.1.1 giving children Smartphones with 3G/4G capability is to give them unrestricted access to the Internet.

4.1.2 any measures the School takes to reduce access to Social Media sites though Web filtering its Internet access can be negated Smartphone Internet access through 3G/4G.

4.2 The School blocks the following Social Media sites on its WIFI network that is accessible to pupils:

4.2.1 **Facebook** – because it is a distraction during the School working day.

4.2.2 **Instagram** – because it is a distraction during the School working day.



- 4.2.3 **Snapchat** – because it is a distraction during the School working day.
- 4.2.4 **YouTube** is restricted during lesson time because live streaming / downloads can affect the ability of teachers to perform their duties.
- 4.3 The School does not block the following Social Media sites on its WIFI network that is accessible to pupils:
 - 4.3.1 **WhatsApp** – because it is a primary means of communication between parents and their children.
 - 4.3.2 **Twitter** – because it is a primary means of communicating School news to pupils, parents, and the wider community.

5 HELP AND SUPPORT

- 5.1 Additional help and support on how to apply privacy settings on popular social media sites:
 - Twitter <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169886>
 - Instagram <https://help.instagram.com/116024195217477/>
 - Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/help/325807937506242/>
 - Snapchat <https://support.snapchat.com/a/privacy-settings>
 - Youtube <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/157177?hl=en>