# OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

## Social Media Policy



OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL
Overstone Park, Northampton, NN6 0DT

| Social Media Policy | | |
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| **Date** | **Review Date** | **Coordinator** |
| **September 2024** | **August 2025** | **Principal - Mrs M Brown**<br>**Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mrs D York**<br>**Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Miss A West**<br>**Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Ms J Sinnamon** |

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# Purpose and scope

This policy aims to:

- Set guidelines and rules on the use of the schools' social media channels.
- Establish clear expectations for the way members of our school communities engage with each other online.
- Support the schools' policies on data protection, online safety and child protection and safeguarding.

Staff, students and parents/carers are required to read, understand and comply with this Social Media Policy.

This policy applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes, whether during school/working hours or otherwise.

It applies regardless of whether the social media account is accessed using:

- School IT facilities and equipment.
- Equipment belonging to members of staff and students.
- Any other IT/Internet-enabled equipment.

All members of our school communities should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, may be subject to copyright, safeguarding and data protection legislation. Everyone must also operate in line with our Equalities, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment, Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies.

### Definition of social media

For the purpose of this policy, 'social media' is considered to include all technologies that allow individuals to communicate and share information (including photos and videos). This includes group messaging services such as WhatsApp.

# Use of official school social media accounts

The school use a variety of social media channels, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram.

These accounts are managed by designated members of staff. Staff members who have not been authorised to manage, or post to, the account, must not access, or attempt to access, these accounts.

If you have suggestions for something you would like to appear on the school's social media channel(s), please speak to the Principal.

### Social media channels

The school will post on its social media channels:

- Alerts about changes (e.g. changes to procedures, severe weather updates, staffing changes).
- Reminders (e.g. approaching deadlines, events or class activities, reminders about policies/procedures).
- Advertisements for school events or activities.
- Job vacancies or requests for volunteers.
- Links to newsletters, guidance and factsheets for parents and carers.
- Achievements of students and staff.
- Photos or posts about school trips, events and activities.
- Seasonal greetings and messages about religious festivals.

The schools **will not** post on its social media channels:

- Names and photos of individuals (unless they have given consent).
- Harmful or abusive comments.
- Messages to specific people.
- Political statements.
- Advertisements for business unless directly related to the school.
- Any posts from personal staff, student or parent/carer social media accounts.
- Any information which may identify an individual's personal circumstances.
- Links to staff members' personal accounts.

### Moderation

Staff responsible for managing the school's social media accounts will delete as soon as reasonably possible:

- Abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or inflammatory comments.
- Comments we consider to be spam.
- Personal information, such as telephone numbers, address details, etc.
- Posts that advertise unrelated commercial activity.

Every reasonable effort will be taken to politely address concerns or behaviour of individual users. If users are repeatedly abusive or inappropriate, measures will be taken which may include reporting the user and their comments to the social media platform, blocking the user and taking legal action if necessary.

Staff responsible for managing social media accounts will also ensure that all content shared on social media platforms is age appropriate for the school community.

### Following other social media users

The school:

- Will only like or share posts with a non-commercial interest - being 'liked' by the school does not imply endorsement of any kind.
- May follow other users if you follow the school - being followed by the school does not imply endorsement of any kind.

# Personal use of social media by staff

The school expects all staff (including proprietors) to consider the safety of students and the risks (reputational and financial) to the school when using social media channels, including when doing so in a personal capacity. Staff are also responsible for checking and maintaining appropriate privacy and security settings of their personal social media accounts.

Staff members will report any safeguarding issues they become aware of.

When using social media, staff **should not**:

- Use personal accounts to conduct the school business.
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with students past or present.
- Accept 'friend requests' from, or communicate with parents/carers, past or present*.
- Complain about the school, individual students, colleagues or parents/carers.
- Reference or share information about individual students, colleagues or parents/carers.
- Post images of students.
- Express personal views or opinions that could be interpreted as those of the school.
- Link their social media profile to their work email account.
- Use social media to contact past or present students after leaving the employment of the school.

*The school acknowledges that some members of staff may also be parents at their school and be friends with other parents/carers online. Staff should consider the content they post on social media and follow the professional standards outlined in the school's Code of Conduct and guidance within this policy.

All staff will be mindful that what they post on social media may potentially be viewable by parents/carers, students and other members of staff and should consider the content of their posts carefully.

Any concerns regarding a member of staff's personal use of social media will be dealt with in line with the Staff Conduct Policy.

Any communication received from current students (unless they are family members) on any personal social media accounts must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or member of the senior leadership team immediately.

Staff should not also have contact via personal accounts with past students (if ongoing communication is required, this should be done using official school channels).

Staff should consider carefully how their social media accounts are set up, including how easy it is for students or parents/carers to find their personal accounts and what they may be able to see.

We recommend that all staff:

- Check the privacy settings on their social media accounts and limit access to friends and family etc.
- Consider using a name and profile picture which doesn't directly identify them.

## Personal use of social media by students

Students are encouraged to:

- Be respectful to members of staff, and the school, at all times.
- Be respectful to other students and parents/carers.
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with appropriately.

Students **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff.
- Complain about the school.
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other students or parents/carers.
- Post images or videos of other students without their permission.

Students are not permitted to use social media during the school day. Any concerns about a student's social media use will be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

## Personal use of social media by parents/carers

The school expect parents/carers to help model safe, responsible and appropriate social media use for our students.

When communicating with the school via official communication channels, or using private/independent channels to talk about the school, parents and carers should:

- Be respectful towards, and about, members of staff and the school at all times.
- Be respectful of, and about, other parents/carers and other students and children.
- Direct any complaints or concerns through the school's official channels, so they can be dealt with appropriately.

Parents/carers **should not** use social media to:

- Complain about individual members of staff, other parents/carers or students.
- Complain about the school.
- Make inappropriate comments about members of staff, other parents/carers or students.

- Draw attention to, or discuss, behaviour incidents.
- Post images or videos of children other than their own.

Parents/carers are reminded that social media is not a legitimate way to raise concerns about their child's school. Any concerns should be directed to the school in the first instance in line with the school's Complaints Procedure.

## Monitoring and review

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, for legitimate business purposes. This includes ascertaining and demonstrating that expected standards are being met by those using the systems, and for the detection and investigation of unauthorised use of the systems (including where this is necessary to prevent or detect crime).

## Related policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Acceptable Use Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Complaints Procedure.

| Principal: | Mrs M F Brown | Date | September 2024 |
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