

RYDES HILL PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

P48 (ISI 7A) – SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



RYDES HILL

PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY

CHILDREN'S MISSION STATEMENT

Think deeply, live wisely, love generously

MISSION STATEMENT

- ❖ Rydes Hill Preparatory School and Nursery is a Catholic school where children learn how to live in a loving relationship with God and each other.
- ❖ Christian virtues of love and justice, faith and courage, hope and perseverance are fostered.
- ❖ Pupils and staff comprise individuals of different faiths and beliefs but the Rydes Hill community aspires to unity within the life of the school based on shared moral values.
- ❖ The importance placed on the development of individual talents is at the heart of what the school stands for and all are encouraged and challenged to be the best they can be.

Written By :	Sarah Norville – Headmistress	17 th September 2020
Reviewed By :	Sarah Norville – Headmistress	11 th September 2024
Approved By :	Marketing Committee	17 th September 2024
Governor Review By :	Not required	

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Revision History

Revision	Paragraph Number	Revision
August 2014		Original Document
August 2015		Update
May 2016		Update
October 2016		Update
March 2017		Update
October 2018		Update
September 2019		Update
September 2020		Update
September 2022		Update
September 2024		General review. No updates

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions

Abbreviation / Acronym	Definition
Colleague	Another member of Staff
Parent Body	Committee members, past and present, of Friends of Rydes Hill Preparatory School
Staff	All employees of Rydes Hill Preparatory School, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff, zero hours employees, members of our Parent Body and volunteers.

Aim / Objective / Statement of Intent

1. This policy is intended to help **staff** make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and other relevant social media websites.
2. This policy outlines the standards the School expects **staff** to observe when using social media, the circumstances in which we will monitor your use of social media and the action we will take in respect of breaches of this policy.
3. This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

Who is covered by the policy?

4. This policy covers all employees working at all levels and grades, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff, members of our **parent body** and volunteers (collectively referred to as **staff** in this policy).

The scope of the policy

5. All **staff** are expected to comply with this policy, and all other relevant policies, at all times to protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interests of our school and our services, employees, parent body, pupils and competitors.
6. Breach of this policy may be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedures (where these can be applied) and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to summary dismissal. Breach of this policy by members of the Parent Body may be dealt with under our P02 Exclusions Policy.

Responsibility for implementation of the policy

7. The Headmistress has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.
8. The Headmistress and the Bursar are responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for changes to minimise risks to our operations.
9. All **staff** are responsible for their own compliance with this policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied. All **staff** should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Bursar.

10. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Bursar.

Using social media sites in our name

11. Only persons authorised by the Headmistress are permitted to post material on a social media website in our name and on our behalf. Any breach of this restriction will amount to gross misconduct.

12. Before using work-related social media you must:

- Read and understand this policy and
- Seek and gain prior written approval to do so from the Headmistress

Rules for use of social media

13. Whenever you are permitted to use social media in accordance with this policy, you must adhere to the following general rules:

- Do not upload, post, forward or post a link with any abusive, obscene, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory or defamatory content.
- Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a **colleague** onto a social media website should inform their immediate line manager or the Bursar or Headmistress.
- Never disclose commercially sensitive, anti-competitive, private or confidential information. If you are unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Bursar or Headmistress.
- Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.
- Before you include a link to a third party website, check that any terms and conditions of that website permit you to link to it. All links must be done so that it is clear to the user that they have moved to the third party's website.
- Do not post, upload, forward or post a link to chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip.
- You are personally responsible for content you publish into social media tools – be aware that what you publish will be public for many years.
- If you feel even slightly uneasy about something you are about to publish, then you

shouldn't do it.

- Do not discuss colleagues, parent body, pupils or suppliers without their approval.
- Always consider other's privacy and avoid discussing topics that may be inflammatory. If taking, storing or using images of pupils it is essential that you consult with the Marketing Co-ordinator to ensure that parental consent has been obtained. If taking, storing or using, images of **staff**, it is essential that you obtain their consent before doing so.

Monitoring use of social media websites

14. **Staff** should be aware that any use of social media websites (whether or not accessed for work purposes) may be monitored and, where breaches of this policy are found, action may be taken under our Disciplinary Procedures.
15. We reserve the right to restrict or prevent access to certain social media websites if we consider personal use to be excessive. Monitoring is only carried out to the extent permitted or as required by law and as necessary and justifiable for business purposes.
16. Misuse of social media websites can, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence or otherwise give rise to legal liability against you and us. It may also cause embarrassment to us and our pupils, their families, other **staff** and governors.
17. In particular uploading, posting, forwarding or posting a link to any of the following types of material on a social media website, whether in a professional or personal capacity, will amount to gross misconduct (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Pornographic material (that is writing, pictures, films and video clips of a sexually explicit nature);
 - A false and defamatory statement about any person or organisation;
 - Material which is offensive, obscene, criminal, discriminatory, derogatory or may cause embarrassment to the school or our **staff**;
 - Confidential information about a **staff** member, parent or pupil (which you do not have express authority to disseminate);
 - Any other statement which is likely to create any liability (whether criminal or civil);
 - Material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person.
18. Any such action will be addressed under our Disciplinary Procedures and could result in

summary dismissal.

19. Where evidence of misuse is found, we may undertake a more detailed investigation in accordance with our *Disciplinary Procedures*, involving the examination and disclosure of monitoring records to those nominated to undertake the investigation and any witnesses or managers involved in the investigation. If necessary, such information may be handed to the Police in connection with a criminal investigation.
20. If you notice any use of social media by other members of **staff** in breach of this policy please report it to the Headmistress or Bursar.
21. Where a member of our **Parent Body** fails to comply with this policy, the School will investigate further and depending on the outcome, may require the individual to stand down from their role. A serious breach may result in further sanctions against the parent including permanent exclusion of their child/children from the School and relevant information being handed to the Police in connection with a criminal investigation.

Monitoring and review of this policy

22. The Marketing Co-Ordinator shall be responsible for reviewing this policy on a regular basis. This policy will also be reviewed by the Marketing Committee.

Implementation of the policy

23. The Headmistress has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. All **staff** are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Bursar or Headmistress. Questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be directed to the Bursar.

Relationship with other School policies

24. If an internet post would breach our policies in another forum it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, **staff** are prohibited from using social media to:
 - Breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies;
 - Breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality;
 - Breach our disciplinary rules;
 - Defame or disparage the School or our affiliates, parents, **staff**, pupils, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders;
 - Harass or bully other **staff** in any way or breach our Anti-bullying Policy;
 - Unlawfully discriminate against other **staff** or third parties or breach our Equal Opportunities policy;
25. Behaviour online can be permanent and so **staff** must be extra cautious about what they say as it can be harder to retract.

26. **Staff** must also be aware of the particular risks to internet security that social media presents and so to comply with the existing School policy on online safety and must take any extra measures necessary not to allow any of their actions on social media sites to create vulnerability to any School systems.
27. **Staff** who breach any of the above policies will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. For members of our **Parental Body** who breach any of the above policies they will be subject to action as outlined in paragraph 21 above.

Responsible use of social media

28. **Staff** must be aware that their role comes with particular responsibilities and they must adhere to the School's strict approach to social media. Staff must:

- Ensure that wherever possible their privacy settings on social media sites are set so that pupils cannot access information relating to their personal lives;
- Obtain prior written approval of the Headmistress to the wording of any personal profile which you intend to create where the School is named or mentioned on a social networking site;
- Seek approval from the Headmistress or Marketing Co-Ordinator before they speak about or make any comments on behalf of the School on the Internet or through any social networking site;
- Report to the Headmistress immediately 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;
- Consider whether a particular posting puts their effectiveness as a member of **staff** at risk;
- Post only what they want the world to see.

29. **Staff** must not:

- Provide references for other individuals, on social or professional networking sites, as such 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 the School, your **colleagues**, parents or pupils without prior permission of the Headmistress or Marketing Co-Ordinator;
- Use commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary, or libellous. **Staff** must exercise caution with regards to exaggeration, colourful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions and derogatory

- remarks or characterisations;
- Discuss pupils or colleagues or criticise the School or **staff**;
- Initiate friendships with pupils on any personal social network sites;
- Accept pupils as friends on any such sites; **staff** must decline any pupil-initiated friend requests

The use of social media for School purposes

30. Social media should not be used for purposes relating to the School's business or the delivery of its curriculum to pupils unless the prior authority of the Headmistress has been obtained.
31. Where the use of social media is authorised for such purposes this Policy must be followed.
32. Any social media accounts (including blogs, forums, X (Formerly known as Twitter) etc), sites or pages used or set up for the purpose of furthering the School's business or facilitating the provision of the curriculum to its pupils, shall remain the property of the School and the Marketing Co-Ordinator must have access to it.
33. Staff must carefully consider whether appropriate permission to share images has been given before posting any images on social media or on the school website. Details of permissions are available from the marketing officer. Staff must also comply with P09 Taking, Storing and Using Images of Pupils and Staff Policy.

Personal use of social media

34. We recognise that **staff** work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at school or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. We authorise such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity. While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the organisation's business are also prohibited. **Staff** must ensure that their use of social media does not create any breaches of internet security and therefore must be careful to avoid any applications that might interrupt our IT systems. Excessive use of social media that interrupts **staff** productivity will be subject to a disciplinary procedure, consistent with this policy.
35. We prohibit **staff** from using their work email address for any personal use of social media.

The monitoring of social media

36. The contents of our IT resources and communications systems are our property. Therefore, **staff** should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversations, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.
37. 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, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.
38. We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice. Further information is available in P41 Data Retention Policy and our Privacy Notices P53 & P54.
39. Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.

Social media and the end of employment

40. If a member of **staff's** employment with our School should end, for whatever reason, any personal profiles on social or professional networking sites should be immediately amended to reflect the fact that you are no longer employed or associated with our School.
41. All professional contacts that a member of **staff** has made through their course of employment with us belong to our School, regardless of whether or not the member of **staff** has made social media connections with them.
42. All members of **staff** agree that on the termination of employment they will provide to the Head or the Bursar any relevant passwords and other information to allow access to any social media site, page or account which has been used or set up for the purpose of furthering the School's business or facilitating the provision of its curriculum and will relinquish any authority they may have to manage or administer any such site, page or account.