Thornleigh Salesian College

Social Media Policy

Person Responsible:	AAHT Whole School ICT
Last Reviewed:	December 2022
Adopted:	December 2022
Next Review due:	December 2024

Introduction

The purpose of this document is intended to address the use in Thornleigh Salesian College (referred to as 'the School') by Users (including but not limited to Employees, Students, Visitors, Contractors) of Social Media.

The School recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities that a social media presence offers.

The School aims to build relationships and work with the whole community to share news, information and successes. We will endeavour to use social media to engage appropriately with students & parents, promoting the School within the community and forwarding the Salesian ethos of Don Bosco.

The School maintains its primary social media presence on the Twitter and Instagram platforms. Departmental and activity based accounts are aggregated into a main TSC Twitter account that is presented on the school website homepage. This main account is also used to re-tweet and promote events and activities in the wider catholic community and Salford Diocese. Separate social media accounts are maintained by IT Support for use managing the School's presence on other platforms.

In order to provide clarity and consistency for staff, while recognising the corresponding challenges for the School, we have in place procedures to restrict Social Media use and encourage common-sense boundaries. We wish to support staff in engaging with colleagues, students and the wider community with Social Media, while providing appropriate guidance and training on best practice.

Users are advised to read other policies related to Social Media use, particularly the e-Safety Policy, IT Acceptable Use Policy and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy.

1. Scope

For the purposes of this document, social media is defined as any online interactive communication platform not hosted internally within the school. Common examples include but not limited to; Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn.

This document applies to all users and to all communications, which directly or indirectly, represent the School. It applies to online communications posted at any time and from any location, whether to an individual, a limited group or the general public.

The School respects privacy and understands that users may use social media platforms in their private lives. However, personal communications likely to have a negative impact on professional standards and/or the institution's reputation fall within the scope of this guidance.

Professional responsibilities apply regardless of the medium. All social media communications that might affect the School's reputation, whether made either in a private or professional capacity, must comply with relevant school policies related to user conduct.

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on a school-owned accounts or using the School's name. All professional communications are within the scope of this document (and are subject to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy).

Personal communications are those made via a private social media account. In some limited circumstances, these communications are subject to this document.

In all cases, where a private account is used which clearly identifies the School itself or the user and an employee of the School it must be made clear that the user is not communicating on behalf of the School. An appropriate disclaimer should prefix such messages. Use the following example as a template:

"The views expressed here are my own and in no way reflect the views of Thornleigh Salesian College" should be included.

Private communications that do not refer to the school are outside the scope of this document.

Digital communications with learners via social media platforms should always comply with the best practice outlined in this document.

Staff should refrain from accepting 'friend' requests or connections from students except where the member of staff has a connection with the learner beyond the context of the institution.

HR may use social media for the purposes of recruitment selection.

2. <u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>

There are clear lines of responsibility for social media use within the School.

IT Support is responsible for
- Keeping up to date with technology developments through appropriate CPD
- Reviewing and updating all relevant documentation
- Advising Senior Leaders on training and guidance on social media
- Alerting Pastoral Teams & / or Senior Leaders to reported incidents
- Assisting in responding to and investigating any reported incidents

The Media Department are responsible for
- Administrating and taking day to day ownership of official School Social Media accounts as directed by Senior Leaders (where appropriate)
- Maintaining a directory of college Social Media accounts with the assistance of IT Support
- Addressing concerns or questions regarding posts or comments via official and personal accounts

Staff are responsible for
- Knowing the contents of this document and its procedures
- Ensuring that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Attending appropriate training
- Informing Media Department / IT Support where a subject specific account is to be used
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts when naming the institution
- Reporting any incidents in line with section 5 below

3. <u>Behaviour</u>

The School requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this document and other relevant policies.

Users will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about other members of the School and wider community.

Digital communications by users must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this guidance. Where an incident is reported, refer to section 5 below.

Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassment, breaching of data protection, confidentiality, breaking of copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the School and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant Senior Leader, and escalated where appropriate. The School will take appropriate action when necessary.

Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the School will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, the School will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the Disciplinary Policy.

The use of social media by users while at work may be monitored, in line with the relevant School policies.

The School permits reasonable and appropriate access to private social media sites for staff and restricted access for students to the Twitter platform only. However, where the School suspects excessive use, and considers this use to be interfering with relevant duties, disciplinary action may occur.

4. Security

IT Support are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for official (main feed) social media accounts are of adequate strength and kept secure. Department heads are responsible for passwords and other access controls for department specific social media accounts. IT Support must be consulted in the event department heads are unsure of how to secure accounts. Passwords should be regularly changed in line with the School policies and under no circumstances should passwords be shared.

In regard to personal social media accounts, users should be familiar with privacy settings and ensure that these are appropriate for both content and intended audience.

Enhanced filtering and firewall protections have been put in place by IT Support to prevent accidental or malicious access of IT systems and social media accounts. Digital communications, including via social media sites, over the School network, will be monitored in line with the School policies.

5. Incidents and Response

Any breach of this guidance could lead to disciplinary action. Where a breach of this guidance is reported to the School this matter will be dealt with seriously and in line with the School Disciplinary and ICT Acceptable Use policies. The School will act immediately to prevent, as far as reasonably possible, any damage to an individual, their rights or the institution's reputation.

Any stakeholder or member of the public may report an incident to the School. This should be directed immediately to IT Support or a relevant Senior Leader.

Where it appears that a breach has taken place, IT Support or a relevant Senior Leader will review the event and decide on the most appropriate and proportionate course of action.

Where the incident is considered to be serious, this will be reported directly to The Head Teacher.

Where staff are in receipt of offensive, unacceptable content via social media, this should be reported to a relevant line manager immediately.

Where questionable content has been received by any school owned social media accounts, IT Support must be informed prior to any response being submitted.

6. Education and Training

The School wishes to make it clear to users what our policies contain and the reasons behind it. IT Support will be on hand to answer any queries and address any comments.