

Guidance for Community Members on the use of Social Media

Principles

The College understands that social media and various digital platforms provide a quick and efficient means of communication and information sharing.

The College also recognises that access to technology in school gives pupils, parents and teachers greater opportunities to learn, engage, communicate and develop skills that will prepare them for work, life and citizenship. We are committed to helping our pupils develop 21st century technology and communication skills, and have robust Staff Acceptable Use, Pupil Acceptable Use and Bring Your Own Device Policies to ensure that staff and pupils use technology in a safe and positive way.

It is important that parents, friends and other members of the St Dunstan's community also observe a common set of guiding principles in the use of social media in order to ensure the happiness and safety of everyone in the community. These guiding principles are outlined in this document, which should be read in conjunction with *P15: ICT Policy* and *P4: Anti-bullying*.

Benefits of social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, SnapChat, WhatsApp, etc.)

- Improved communication links with parents of St Dunstan's pupils
- A means of promoting events and celebrating achievement within the College
- Allows greater engagement with College sport and the promotion of shared values
- Promotion of literacy and extended learning through the posting of links to relevant material
- Maintains links with alumni
- Allows for early notification of changes to the timings of the school day or co-curricular activities due to inclement weather or other change in circumstance

Risks associated with the use of social media

- Opportunity for cyberbullying, defamation and other harmful online behaviour
- Opportunity for rapid and wide dissemination of gossip, rumour and/or misinformation
- Possibility of spreading personal information about children or adults, including images, which place the individual at risk of harm

- Possibility of causing offence to members of the community through the sharing of political, religious or other contentious views
- Chance of bringing St Dunstan's College into disrepute through sharing of inappropriate material

Guidance on the use of social media

The clear benefits of the use of social media and other digital platforms must be carefully weighed against the risks as outlined above. The College asks parents, friends and other College community members to adhere to the guidance below when using social media to discuss or share any information related to St Dunstan's College.

- Comments published online must be courteous and respectful of staff, other parents and pupils
- Appropriate language should be used
- Any concerns regarding pupils or the College should be raised directly with an appropriate member of staff rather than posted on social media
- No discussion of individual pupil sanctions or private communication between staff and specific parents should be shared on social media
- No photographs of children should be posted on social media, except by the parents of the child in the photograph. Photographs posted by parents should not be shared or redistributed by others
- No comments, postings or photographs should be shared which could bring the College into disrepute, including making comments about pupils, parents, staff members, governors or the wider community
- Adult members of the community should never communicate with pupils who are not family members via social media
- The College operates a zero-tolerance policy for cyberbullying and any instance of cyberbullying within the College community should be reported to staff as a matter of urgency

Adhering to the guidance above will ensure that all members of the College community will be safe and happy using social media to engage with others within the community. Failure to comply with this guidance may result in the College taking action against an individual or group of individuals, including legal action, to ensure the safety and security of community members and the integrity of the St Dunstan's College reputation.

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