

This policy provides specific guidance in relation to the use of social media both in and outside School. It is applicable to all staff (which in this policy will include all employees, volunteers, contract and agency workers). Staff must observe these professional standards if they are using social media on behalf of the School, and should consider the policy and associated guidelines when using social media in a personal capacity as misjudgments in the use of social media can impact on their employment.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is the term commonly given to internet and mobile-based channels and tools that allow users to interact with each other and share opinions and content.

Staff should be aware that there are many examples of social media and it is a constantly changing area as new apps and channels are developed.

At the time of writing the term would be used to describe applications such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and YouTube. This policy applies to these and any that may emerge.

Use of Social Media at Work

Social media is a fact of life in the 21st century and its use in the workplace is an area where expectations and protocols must be adhered to. Computer systems are provided for staff to carry out their working duties, which may include accessing social media channels to post relevant school related content. Such use must - in all circumstances - be GDPR compliant and should not: involve additional cost to the School, except where this has been budgeted and approved; compromise the integrity of the School's systems; impede or interfere with the performance of the duties of a member of staff; cause embarrassment or harm to any individual; cause reputational risk to the School.

Personal Use

We understand that staff may wish to access social media websites while they are at work. However, it is important that we set a good example to our pupils and that use should not interfere with staff duties. Therefore, personal use (whether on School hardware or personal devices) should be limited to breaks and lunchtimes.

Official Use

There are a number of staff who will legitimately be required to use social media in the workplace. The following pre-agreed School affiliated social media accounts are permitted and those who are named account users are granted access to use social media as part of their role.

Account Name	Handle (or similar depending on the platform used)	Focus
George Watson's College	@GWC_News	Life at Watson's
Sport @ GWC	@GWC_Sport	Sport at Watson's
Music @ GWC	@GWC_Music	Music at Watson's Outside the Classroom Enrichment only
Watson's Malawi Partnership	@WatsonsMalawi	Watson's partnership with Malawi
Galleon at GWC	@GWC_Galleon	The Galleon club
GWC Parents' Association	@GwcParents	Parents' Association
GWC and the Community	GWCandCommunity	GWC working with the community

The Pavilion at Myreside	The Pavilion at Myreside	The Pavilion at Myreside
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Social media accounts run by our Watsonian Sections are managed separately.

All pre-agreed accounts above have permission to open accounts and replicate content across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram if they feel it is appropriate. (Accounts names/handles must be kept as close to the Twitter names as is available).

The profile picture for five of the pre-agreed accounts has been designed by the Marketing and Communications team and should remain as the account profile image indefinitely. The Galleon Club, The Pavilion at Myreside and our Malawi Partnership are the only accounts permitted to use their own logo as their profile picture. All accounts must follow the school's policies and guidelines.

No other School affiliated accounts are permitted to be opened.

No other social media accounts are permitted to use the Watson's branding, including the school Coat of Arms.

Processes and Security for the pre-agreed social media accounts.

- **Account access** - access to each account can only be given to a maximum of six GWC members of staff. One GWC email address should be used against each account. Requests for this should be made directly with IT and should not be linked to another member of staff's email address e.g Sportsocial@gwc.org.uk
- **Passwords** - a random password generator should be used to create the account password. The password should be changed every six months; or with immediate effect if a member of staff with access to any social media accounts is no longer employed by GWC, or their access is to be revoked. Passwords and access should not be changed without prior agreement from the M&C team.
- **Marketing and Communications** - all account logins and names of those with access should be shared with the Marketing and Communications team who will keep a copy in a password protected document. The M&C team will provide a branded profile image for each account which must be used.
- **Review** - the M&C team will conduct a termly review (at a minimum) of each account to ensure content is on brand, doesn't breach any codes of conduct and that the administration of each account is in line with the above.
- **Training** - all staff who have access to the school social media accounts will undertake an annual survey/mini course to refresh their knowledge and understanding of managing a social media account on behalf of the School.
- **Best practice training** - brand guidelines, content development, frequency and the social media policy are all areas that M&C will be able to support colleagues to more effectively manage their accounts.
- **Account activity** - during term time, accounts will normally be expected to post once a week, at a minimum. Where accounts are less active, or not building a following, the M&C team will review the account and might be able to offer support and guidance for content development or suggest an alternative communications solution. Any account deemed to be inactive may be closed.
- **Reporting breaches** - any misuse and/or accidental breach of policy must be reported to the M&C team to allow for a record to be kept.

The attached Guidelines (Appendix 1) must be adhered to if using social media channels on behalf of the School.

Monitoring use of social media during work time

Responsibility for monitoring the use of social media, by any member of staff during work time, sits within the remit of IT and is covered by the **Information Security: Investigation into Computer Misuse Policy**.

Use of Social Media in the Recruitment Process

Circumstances under which the School might review an individual's social media activity, as part of any recruitment process, is outlined in the School's Recruitment Policy.

Social Media in your Personal Life

The School recognises that many staff make use of social media in a personal capacity. Whether acting on behalf of the School or not, staff must be aware that they can cause damage to the standing and reputation of the School and to their own personal reputation and their standing as a professional involved in education, if they post illegal, inappropriate or controversial content that links them with the School.

We recognise that staff are proud to work at Watson's and making reference to this on social media, where appropriate, is permitted, for example on LinkedIn as part of a professional biography. Staff may wish to discuss work on social media. However, your personal online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must never contain the School's name, branding or logo.

If you choose to discuss your work on social media, for example, when giving opinions on education or within your professional field, you must include a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer" in your profile.

Any communications on social media that employees make in a personal capacity through social media **must not**:

- bring the School or themselves into disrepute, for example by:
 - criticising or arguing with parents, pupils, colleagues or other schools;
 - making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups;
 - posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
 - using lewd, profane or otherwise inappropriate language or permitting others to in a way that it can be associated with that member of staff
 - posting content that includes images, names, or other personal information about a member of the School community without their explicit consent.

- breach confidentiality, for example by:
 - discussing pupils (even anonymously);
 - revealing business sensitive information;
 - discussing the School's internal workings (such as its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public).

- breach copyright, for example by:
 - using someone else's images or written content without permission;
 - failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.

- do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
 - making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, or age;
 - using social media to bully another individual (such as colleague);
 - posting images that are discriminatory or offensive, or links to such content.

- cause harm, embarrassment or loss of reputation to the School through the posting, or reposting, of communications (or links to such), regarded by the School as inappropriate in any way.

If staff wish to manage a professional industry related account e.g. 'Edinburgh's Mr Maths', the School expects the following to be adhered to:

Do

- Share industry content/third party content as you see relevant
- Within you account bio include the term - 'The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer'
- Retweet/reshare activity posted by GWC affiliated social media accounts
- Tag GWC affiliated accounts as you see relevant
- Adhere to GDPR.

Don't

- Use your social media account as a classroom aid or support
- Reference or tag GWC pupils (only to be done through a retweet/reshare from a school affiliated account)
- Post any pictures of GWC pupils (only to be done through a retweet/reshare from a school affiliated account)
- Solicit or engage with GWC pupils through your personal social media account
- Use any GWC branding on your social media account
- Ask or expect any of the GWC affiliated social media accounts to retweet/reshare your account content.

Social Media and Child Protection

Members of staff must not use personal social media accounts to make contact with pupils or recent former pupils. Only School approved accounts are permitted to do so where appropriate. Equally, they should not accept contact requests made from pupils, or recent former pupils, unless this is necessary for legitimate and professional School business. It is, however, recognised that there will be situations where the personal and professional lives of members of staff inevitably intersect, for example where the children of members of staff are pupils at the School. Whilst such situations may be unavoidable, they do not reduce the expectation that the conduct of members of staff should be demonstrably beyond reproach. If any member of staff is unsure about whether or not a course of action may be viewed as suspect, they should seek the guidance of the Head of Junior School or Head of Senior School without delay.

Disciplinary Action over Social Media Use

All employees are required to adhere to this policy. Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the school, may constitute gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

Implementation

When updated, this policy will be communicated to all staff via the Staff Briefing, posted on the Staff Portal and will be advised to new staff joining the School as part of a formal induction programme. Line Managers are responsible for communicating this policy to others such as volunteers, contractors or agency workers.

Approval and Review

The lead reviewer for this policy is the Director of Admissions, Marketing and Development, who will consult Human Resources and review in line with the most up-to-date Best Practice as identified in the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Guidelines.

This policy has been approved by the Principal's Leadership Team. It will be reviewed every two years, or sooner where there are changes to legislation, significant changes to the school's structure or other variables that require a review. **Date of next review: November 2025.**

Questions or Complaints

Clarification on the terms or operation of this policy may be obtained from the Director of Admissions, Marketing and Development.

Any complaints in relation to this policy or its operation should be directed to the Principal.

Please refer to the Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children Policy if you are responsible for taking/sharing images of pupil activities and trips.

Appendix 1

Social Media Guidelines

– for use with GWC accounts and on behalf of GWC

The points raised in the Policy regarding the use of social media in your social life hold true for its use in a professional capacity. The School believes that social media provides a useful way to communicate with our pupils, parents, prospective parents, former pupils and the wider community.

Staff who contribute to our social media presence must be aware, at all times, while contributing to the school's social media activities that they are representing the school, and must adhere to the following rules and must not cause harm, embarrassment or loss of reputation to the School through the posting, or reposting, of communications (or links to such), regarded by the School as inappropriate in any way.

The following guidelines should always be adhered to:

- **Understand GDPR and data protection legislation and never post content unless relevant, explicit consent has been given.** All pupils must have given consent prior to the use of their image being used on social media. Pupils over the age of 12 can give verbal consent at the time of photographs/video being taken. A record of consent for Junior School pupils is held by the Junior School. If you are sending photographs/videos to any Staff with access to post on School Social Media channels, it is your responsibility to gain consent ahead of sending.
- **You are responsible for what you write and share.** Think before you post and if you are not sure don't post it. Think how you would feel if you/the School was quoted in the newspapers. The School's reputation is in your hands. Does the communication have a purpose and a benefit for the School? Should you get a colleague to check the content first?
- **Inappropriate images.** Images of pupils in swimwear or revealing clothing should never be shared on social media.
- **Remember what goes online stays online.** Comments, posts and images are public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place and sometimes even if you delete the content.
- **Review your own privacy settings regularly.** Consider that any follower/friend can capture and share your content.
- **Respect copyright and give credit where it is due.** Where possible include a link to the source.
- Never abandon key principles of **fact checking, objectivity, spelling and grammar.**
- **Treat people with respect and avoid speaking negatively about others.**
- **Only use first names.** unless full name is being used in other media, or is likely to be used in other media.
- **A picture is worth a 1,000 words.** Images & videos are an excellent way of engaging your community but when you post pictures of other people or mention them in your posts, think about how they'll feel and don't forget to check that relevant approval has been given by parents, pupils and staff.
- **Be careful who you tag...** and don't geotag photos or use the check in function
- **Never identify a pupil by using their social media tag.**
- **Consider if you are excluding anyone** – for example if celebrating a pupil's achievements “did anyone else achieve the same (or better)”.
- **Find your tone of voice – it isn't what you say but how you say it. Try not to be funny or too clever** – it can backfire.
- **Do hashtag the activity you are tweeting about.** #athletics #cricket #hockey #rugby
- **Do not advertise ANY third party organisation without the approval from a member of the Marketing and Communications team**
- **Beware that retweeting/sharing suggests endorsement of the views expressed.** If in doubt **do not** retweet. This is especially important with commercial suppliers as it could amount to advertising.
- **On residential trips don't provide details of where you are in real time or where you are travelling to in real time** – as this has child protection implications
- **Do not get into arguments via social media using a GWC account** – if in doubt, about how to handle this, contact the Head of Department/Director of Admissions, Marketing and Development.
- **If in doubt** – contact a member of the Marketing and Communications team.