

The American School in London

Social Media Policy: Personnel

The current version of any policy, procedure, protocol or guideline is the version held on the ASL website. It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are following the most up-to-date version.

Responsible person	Director of Technology
Approved by	Director of Safeguarding & Compliance
Approval date	June 2024
Next review date	June 2025

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, substitute teachers, athletics coaches, casual workers, trustees, temps and volunteers who may be employed or engaged by the School to work on its behalf in any capacity, as well as prospective applicants. For the purposes of this document, this group of individuals is referred to by the term “ASL personnel.”

This document provides guidance for ASL personnel on the use of social media, which includes blogs, photo/video sharing sites, online forums, social media platforms and other sites and services that permit users to share information with others online. This is not meant to infringe on free speech, but to provide a guideline for use both personally and professionally.

ASL personnel should be aware that the School may observe content and information made available through social media. Good judgment should be used in order to ensure that material posted is neither inappropriate nor harmful to the ASL community.

Use of social media

ASL personnel are expected to maintain respect, responsibility, kindness and integrity while using these services, remaining consistent with the School’s core values.

When using social media, either in a personal or professional context, please remember:

- Your responsibility to serve as a positive role model for students and as a representative of the School is a critical aspect of your employment.
- Social media activities may be visible to current, past or prospective students, parents, colleagues and community members. Please exercise discretion when using social media (even for personal communication) when those communications can reflect on your role at the School, and on the School as a whole.
- There is no absolute guarantee of privacy or absolute guarantee that files are permanently deleted.
- Social media networks, blogs and other types of online content sometimes generate press and media attention or legal questions. Refer these inquiries to your divisional or departmental administrator.

Use of personal social media accounts

ASL personnel will not initiate “friending” or “following” requests with current ASL students using social media channels. If a student initiates a “friending” or “following” request, personnel are to decline or ignore the request. In cases where prospective contacts are ambiguous (usernames or handles that do not directly indicate an individual’s identity), personnel should use caution. When in doubt, ASL personnel are advised to use a closed or private account.

As stated in the ASL Faculty Code of Conduct, ASL personnel should not friend ASL alumni within four years of the alumnus or alumna’s graduation from ASL, and should always use their discretion when connecting with alumni and parents using social media. An exception is made for staff members whose own children are ASL students or recent alumni. An exception is also made for staff members with a family connection to an ASL student or recent alumnus or alumna such as uncle, aunt, godparent and so forth. However, current ASL parents who are also ASL personnel should be cautious when friending their own children, and should be aware that comments made in social media forums are usually not private, and may be viewed by other friends of the account holder depending on individual privacy settings.

ASL personnel should not post commentary, content or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or that can create a hostile work environment.

ASL personnel should not publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential, not for public consumption or potentially harmful. If there are doubts as to whether material is not cleared for public release, ASL personnel should check with the Director of Marketing and Communications. When in doubt, err on the side of caution.

Use of school-affiliated social media accounts

ASL personnel may wish to start a social media or web presence that concerns their work at the School (e.g., a class/group blog or Instagram account). Personnel must adhere to the following guidelines when creating ASL-affiliated social media accounts. Before creating a website or social media account, permission must be obtained from the Director of Marketing and Communications. Personnel must also obtain permission for the use of the school logo as branding on any web presence.

The account:

- Must be associated with an @asl.org email address
- Must only be used to promote ASL and the club's mission and values
- Must not be used to promote a private business for personal gain
- Must include the school disclaimer (detailed below) in the bio

Bio disclaimer

Personnel maintaining a social media presence affiliated with ASL, or from which ASL can be identified, must ensure the account is representative of the relevant class/group/department, and not an official representation of ASL's official social media platforms. Employee-affiliated accounts must not declare, imply or indicate that their content or views are representative of those of the School.

All ASL-affiliated employee social media accounts must declare the following statement in the account bio:

The opinions expressed on this [website or Instagram/Facebook account] are those of the [group name], and do not reflect the views of the American School in London, nor do they constitute official communication from the School.

In the case of a limited number of characters, accounts may use one of the following disclaimers. Accounts must use the first option where possible; the second option if necessary; and the third option as a last resort.

Opinions expressed are those of the [group name], and do not reflect the views of, or constitute official communication from, the American School in London.

Opinions expressed on this account do not reflect the views of, or constitute official communication from, the American School in London.

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If an account is, for any reason, unable to accommodate the space for a disclaimer in the bio, the group leadership should contact the Director of Marketing and Communications to discuss further options.

Social media posts:

- Must not publish personal data (names/photos) without permission from the individuals
- Must not provide specific details about future events—including links to virtual Zoom meetings, or public locations with times/dates where students will be in attendance
- Must not breach copyright or confidentiality
- Must not do anything that may be considered discriminatory against, or bullying and harassment of, any individual
- Must not breach the terms and services of the social media platform

Personnel:

- Must not engage with students via private messages (DM) on social media platforms
- Must not use ASL-affiliated social media accounts to follow students' private accounts
- Must not, if running an employee-led account, share the login details with students, and should keep colleagues with the log-in details to a minimum

Identification of others in images

Generally, the use of students' images in photos and videos in the context of teaching and learning at ASL is permissible. Since it is possible to identify children in these types of media, it is important to safeguard children's personal data. Teachers should follow [these practices and guiding questions](#) when using photos and videos as teaching tools.

On school-affiliated professional social media accounts, personnel may use photos or videos of students, however, **photos must not identify students by both likeness and name**. Students identifiable in a photo should not be mentioned in the accompanying caption. Students not visible in a photo/video may be referred to by first name and class year only. Last names must not be used. Parents have the right to opt out of allowing photos of their children to be used by ASL in a public forum.

On personal social media accounts, personnel may only share photos or videos of students with written permission from the students' parent/guardian.

ASL abides by the [UK Data Protection Act 2018](#); personal information must be protected, and disclosed only pursuant to school policy or as otherwise required by law.