

Policy and Procedure: **Social Media**



**St Edward's
College**
Founded 1929

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Who we are

Mission Statement

At St Edward's College we strive to create exemplary citizens in this increasingly globalised and technological world, placing strong emphasis on character formation, genuine intercultural understanding and leadership skills which will assist them to contribute to the well-being of society.

Introduction

St Edward's College understands that the social media are a growing part of life outside of College. In a seminal paper in 2011, Ahn, Bivona and Di Scala "... found that college policies set the stage for how technologies were used in colleges, and at the time many colleges saw technology access as a privilege that could be revoked, turning to blanket bans to manage use". Fifteen years later, Robards, Goring and Hendry (2025) noted that college policies are now seeking to broaden perspectives and work with social media. However, these authors argue that "despite this balancing act, powerful pressures and panics remain and have evolved, shaping wider discussions of social media and technology use among young people."

Statement of Intent

The College has a responsibility to safeguard pupils, as far as their remit goes, against potential dangers when accessing the internet at college, and to educate pupils about how to protect themselves online when outside of College. St Edward's College is committed to:

- Encouraging the responsible use of social media by all staff, parents and pupils in support of the college's mission statement.
- Protecting pupils from the dangers of social media as far as the college remit allows (eg: cyberbullying)
- Preventing and avoiding damage to the reputation of the college through irresponsible use of social media
- Protecting our staff from cyberbullying and potentially career damaging behaviour
- Providing online safety information to parents and carers



Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, “social media” is defined as any online platform that offers real-time interaction between the user and other individuals or groups including, but not limited to, the following:

- Blogs
- Online discussion forums
- Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Whatsapp etc
- Media-sharing devices, such as YouTube
- ‘Micro-blogging’ applications, such as Twitter

For the purpose of this policy, “cyberbullying” is defined as any social media or communication technology intentionally used to bully an individual or group, including the posting or sharing of messages, images or videos.

For the purpose of this policy, “members of the college community” are defined as any teacher, member of support staff, pupil, parent of a pupil, Trustee, governor or ex-pupil.

Aims

This policy sets out clear expectations for responsible and appropriate social media use by Staff, Educators and Students within the College community. It aims to:

- Safeguard students and staff
- Maintain professional standards
- Protect the College’s reputation
- Promote digital citizenship
- Ensure alignment with GDPR, safeguarding procedures, and internal guidelines

Guiding Principles

All members of the College community must:

- Communicate respectfully online
- Protect personal and sensitive information
- Exercise caution regarding digital footprints
- Avoid harmful, defamatory, or inappropriate behaviour
- Uphold the ethos and values of the College

Expectations for Educators

Professional Conduct

These expectations align with staff guidelines emphasising professionalism and accountability in social media use.

- Maintain professional boundaries online.
- Use only official College communication channels with students and parents.
- Avoid sending or accepting friend/follow requests from current students unless on a monitored College-approved platform.
- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy
- Ensuring pupils adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and that it is implemented fairly and consistently in the classroom
- Reporting any social media misuse by staff, pupils or parents to the appropriate Head of Section immediately
- Attending any training on social media use offered by the College

Educational use of Social Media

Where social media is used for teaching and learning:

- Prior approval from the Headmaster or Senior Leadership Team is required.
- Purpose must be clearly educational.
- Students must receive guidance on safe and responsible participation.

These conditions reinforce procedural expectations outlined in College handbooks and digital communication guidance.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Educators must never:

- Post confidential information, including student names, grades, or identifying details.
- Share internal matters or sensitive College information. This aligns with confidentiality standards and data protection practices outlined in internal policy documents.

Personal Social Media Use

Educators must:

- Exercise discretion when expressing personal views online.
- Avoid posts that could reflect poorly on the College or its stakeholders.
- Use privacy settings appropriately but understand that online content is never fully private.

Expectations for Students

Online Behaviour

Students are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully and avoid harassment or cyberbullying.
- Think critically before posting and understand long-term consequences.
- Follow the behavioural and digital conduct expectations outlined in this policy and the College Behaviour Policy.
- Adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Understand how to use social media appropriately and stay safe online
- Seek help from College staff if they are concerned about something they or a peer have experienced online
- Report online safety incidents and concerns in line with the procedures within this policy
- Demonstrate the same high standards of behaviour as expected within the College

Protection of Privacy

Students must not:

- Share personal contact information publicly.
- Post images or videos of peers or staff without consent.
- Upload recordings taken on College premises without authorisation.

Use during College hours

- Social media use during College hours is restricted according to the College's mobile phone policy and digital learning guidelines.
- Use is only permitted when directed by a teacher for curriculum purposes.

Representing the College

Students must not:

- Create accounts or pages in the College's name without permission.
- Post content that may harm the College's reputation or community.



Expectations for Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Adhering to the principles outlined in this policy
- Taking appropriate responsibility for their use of social media and the influence on their children at home, including signing up for platforms beyond their age-groups
- Promoting safe social media behaviour for both them and their children
- Reading online safety guidance, advice and information provided by the College
- Not engaging in activities involving social media which might bring the College into disrepute
- Not representing their personal views as those of the College on any social medium
- Acting in the best interests of pupils when creating, participating in or contributing to social media sites

Expectations for the Staff Members

The members of the Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the oversight of:

- Monitoring and reviewing all College-run social media accounts
- Vetting and approving individuals who wish to be 'friends' or 'followers' on the College's social media platforms
- Maintaining a log of inappropriate comments or abuse relating to the College
- Handling inappropriate comments or abuse posted on the College's social media accounts, or regarding the College
- Ensuring that enough resources are provided to keep the content of the social media accounts up to date and relevant

Breaches and Consequences

Educators

Breaches may result in:

- Formal disciplinary procedures
- Restricted access to digital resources
- Mandatory professional development
- Referral to safeguarding bodies when necessary

This reflects the disciplinary framework and consequences outlined in the staff policies and internal guidelines.

Students

Breaches may result in:

- Behavioural sanctions in accordance with the Behaviour Policy
- Meetings with parents/guardians
- Confiscation or restriction of devices
- Safeguarding referrals where appropriate

These consequences align with behaviour and disciplinary procedures in the Behaviour Policy.

Parents

Breaches may result in:

i. Informal Resolution

Used for first-time or low-level concerns.

Possible actions:

- A courteous reminder from the College about the policy expectations
- Request to remove harmful or inappropriate social media content
- Guidance on responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship

Rationale: The College values partnership with families and prioritises early, supportive intervention.

ii. Formal Warning

Applied when behaviour persists or content significantly breaches expectations.

Possible actions:

- Written warning outlining the policy breach
- Mandatory meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Requirement to remove offending posts within a specified timeframe

Rationale: Internal documents show that actions bringing the College into disrepute, including social media misuse, may lead to formal action.

iii. Restriction of On-Site Privileges

Used when behaviour disrupts the College community or continues after warnings.

Possible actions:

- Temporary restriction from attending College events (e.g., assemblies, sports days)
- Requirement to route all communication through a designated College contact
- Restrictions on participation in online parent groups operated by the College

Rationale: Your behaviour processes allow proportional measures to protect the learning environment and community relationships.

iv. Involvement of the Headmaster / Board

For serious or repeated breaches involving harassment, defamation, or actions undermining staff safety or College operations.

Possible actions:

- Formal letter from the Headmaster
- Referral to the Board of Governors for review
- Implementation of a behaviour contract outlining required conduct

Rationale: Stronger governance intervention reflects practices outlined in disciplinary pathways for other stakeholders within your existing behavioural policies.

v. Legal or External Agency Referral

Invoked only in cases involving threats, defamation, harassment, safeguarding concerns, or GDPR breaches.

Possible actions:

- Referral to legal counsel when defamatory statements materially harm the College
- Contacting regulatory bodies or authorities if safeguarding risks are involved
- Engagement of data protection officers in cases of privacy breaches

Rationale: The social media guidelines indicate that actions causing harm to the College or community may require external escalation.

vi. Child-Focused Measures (When Parent Behaviour Impacts the Pupil)

The College will always seek to protect pupils from the consequences of parental behaviour, but steps may be needed if online conduct directly affects a child's wellbeing at College.

Possible actions:

- Additional pastoral monitoring for the pupil
- Safeguarding notifications (where appropriate)
- Meetings with the parent to mitigate impact on the child's College life

Rationale: Supporting student wellbeing is a core theme in behaviour and discipline policies.

Reporting and Support

Concerns about online behaviour must be reported promptly to:

- A member of the Senior Leadership Team
- The Headmaster

The College prioritises education, early intervention, and support.



References

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