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Europa School UK Social Media Policy

Version and Date	Action/Notes
V1	2022-23
V2	2026 modified students' use of social media
Review Date July 2029	Review as appropriate if UK government release any guidelines or statutory measures

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

The term social media refers to a computer-based technology that **facilitates the sharing of ideas, thoughts**, and information through virtual networks and communities. Social media is internet-based and gives users quick electronic communication of content, such as personal information, documents, videos, and photos. Social media has personal, professional and educational benefits; but it also presents a number of risks associated which can have a negative impact on the lives and reputations.

This policy distinguishes school related and personal social media

School related social media includes:

- Employee created or maintained social media whose recipients or participants include students, employees or parents whom the employee knows primarily by reason of the employee's employment.
- Social media created or maintained by staff with school equipment or resources; or
- Social media created or maintained by a student at the direction of school staff or as an assignment given by school staff with school equipment or resources.

Personal Social Media

Specific examples of popular social media tools include: image sharing (Flickr, Instagram), video sharing (YouTube), social networking (Facebook , LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest or Twitter), blogs (DSD Blogs, blogger, blogspot), wikis, and discussion boards.

- Nothing in this policy shall prohibit personal or private social media use by employees acting outside of the scope of their employment using personal technology.
- Likewise, nothing in this policy shall prohibit personal or private social media use by students outside of the school environment using personal technology.
- Creation of or access to personal social media by students or staff which creates a disruption or an eminent risk of substantial disruption to the school environment may result in disciplinary action or referral to the police.
- Employees who maintain personal social networking sites shall not allow Europa School UK students to access their personal sites, excepting members of immediate family.
- School staff should restrict the use of personal technology and social media for personal purposes to non-work times or hours.
- Students **must not use** social media for personal purposes while at school or whilst engaging in remote learning.

Social media: benefits

Social media is a big part of many people's social and creative lives. We use social media to **have fun**, make and maintain friendships, share interests, explore identities and develop relationships with family and friends.

Social media can create connections based on shared interests. These might be professional or support networks or sites for commenting on and sharing content about particular interests like games, TV series, music or hobbies.

The educational **benefits from using social media include:**

- Improved digital media literacy
- Improved access to collaborative learning
- Experience with digital creativity
- Access to professional networks for careers
- Improved mental health and wellbeing by connecting with extended family and friends and taking part in local and global online communities.

Social media can also pose risks to individuals:

- being exposed to inappropriate or upsetting content, like mean, aggressive, violent or sexual comments or images
- uploading inappropriate content, like embarrassing or provocative photos or videos of themselves or others
- sharing personal information with strangers – for example, phone numbers, date of birth or location
- exposure to too much targeted advertising and marketing
- misuse of personal data.

- Excessive use of social media leading to social anxiety, depression.

Social media can also pose risks to others via Cyber Bullying & Harassment.

Cyber Bullying & Harassment

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online and can occur through text, apps, social media forums and can include sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

Harassment is unwanted behaviour, which you find offensive, or which makes you feel intimidated or humiliated. It can happen on its own or alongside other forms of discrimination. The unwanted behaviour could be:

- Spoken or written words or abuse.
- Offensive emails, tweets or comments on social networking sites such as intimidating or aggressive behaviour, images and graffiti, maliciously spreading rumours or lies.
- Physical gestures, offensive or threatening comments or content posting comments/photos etc.
- Facial expressions, jokes or deliberately mocking an individual with the intent to harass or humiliate.

Europa School UK is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment within which all staff and students can flourish and achieve their potential, and which is free from bullying and harassment.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

The general guidelines of behaviour for employees, parents, or students who use school related social media include:

- Be aware of and comply with Europa School UK's ICT & Acceptable Use policy and online safety policy.
- Be aware of the permanency of the Internet and think before you post. Once something is sent out, it must be assumed to be permanent and unable to be retracted.
- Once something is sent out, it may be permanent and unable to be retracted.
- Act responsibly since everything online may be accessible to the public.
- Treat others with respect, protect confidential information and the rights of others, and obey copyright law.
- Post positive, meaningful, and thoughtful comments.
- Disagree courteously, without disparaging comments.
- No photos of students obtained through Europa School UK resources may be loaded on personal pages. Student photos posted on school related social media must not contain the student's name.

- School staff must not “friend” students on personal social media; and must avoid overly personal emails, texts, or communications with students on school related social media, excepting members of immediate family.

EMPLOYEES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (see Appendix 1)

To protect staff, students, parents, Europa School UK requires all staff who access or create social networking sites through the school’s resources to abide by the following:

- Access to social media sites using school resources should be for instructional purposes directly related to employment responsibilities and/or educator’s curriculum.
 - What is written should provide value by being thought-provoking and build a sense of community.
 - What is written should help people improve their knowledge and skills, solve problems, or understand situations.
 - Only comment on things about which you are well informed.
 - What is written should invite discussion without inflaming others or demeaning them.
 - Different points of view are appropriate if they are expressed with respect for others.
- Be honest in your communication and clear about your role.
 - Clearly identify yourself as an employee/educator
 - If you have a vested interest in what is being discussed, identify it.
- Establish and maintain a professional image.
 - Post only what you want the world to see; even in private sites, “friends” may copy your post and then make it public. – Write the way you would speak in your professional assignment.
 - Adhere to the standards of professional practice and maintain appropriate school relationships at all times.
 - Maintain a public, professional relationship with students and their parents.
- Do not violate privacy, confidentiality, or legal guidelines.
 - Protect yourself and others by not revealing private, confidential, or sensitive information.
 - All use of social media must comply with privacy requirements.
 - Personally identifiable student information, including photographs, shall not be included in personal social media. Ask permission before posting pictures or videos of others.
 - Pictures and videos of students are education records and require parent notification of directory information prior to posting. Additionally, any posting of a student photo or video may not include the student’s name.
 - Never comment on anything related to legal matters or litigation.
- Report inappropriate online behaviour.
- Take responsibility to ensure that student posts which violate laws or school policies are removed immediately and appropriate disciplinary action is taken.

This guidance for staff and sanctions for misuse are covered in the Europa School uk Code of Conduct for staff.

STUDENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media in school or using the school networks is forbidden.

This policy refers to use of social media by students outside of school.

To ensure safe social media use, Europa School UK requires all students who use social media outside school to abide by the following guidelines:

- If something you are about to post makes you uncomfortable, take a minute to consult with others.
- Do not bully others online.
- Be open offline about what you experience online. Report inappropriate online behaviour.
- Maintain proper professional relationships with any school employee.
- All statements must be true and not misleading.
- Only comment on things about which you are well informed.
- Do not violate privacy, confidentiality, or legal guidelines.
- Protect yourself and others by not revealing private, confidential, or sensitive information.
- Ask permission before posting pictures or videos of others.
- Maintain consistent, acceptable behaviour online and offline.

The school management will follow up any behaviour reported to it concerning social media. Often this behaviour occurs outside of school but since it involves students within our school community it is essential that the school acts to address any potential for cyber bullying which may impact our school community. This may require the school to contact parents, other schools.

Any investigation is carried out according to the Europa School UK Behaviour policy.

PARENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Parents are important partners in developing safe and appropriate use of social media., Parents are encouraged to:

- Monitor your child's use of social media.
- Ensure that your child does not spend an excessive amount of time using social media to the detriment of family times, schoolwork, recreational activity, seeing friends, and have a good amount of sleep.
- Talk frankly to your child about proper online relationships and behaviours.
- Be friends with your children online in order to view your child's online posts.
- Be involved and aware.
- Report inappropriate online behaviour to the school.

Parents also use social media as a means of communicating with other parents about school events and for specific purposes such as school bus groups and class groups. Commonly used platforms are WhatsApp and Classlist. Parents are expected to be role models for their children and the and Europa School UK will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents or the academy
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff

Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school management will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing. This may be to request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online. The School's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent association or governing body cause any discrepancies through their conduct whilst using online messaging. The Principal can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems quickly and effectively. The Principal can also request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

HOW TO REPORT AN INAPPROPRIATE INCIDENT

If a member of staff witnesses information contained on social media sites that contravenes this policy, they should report the issue immediately to the Head of School/Principal. The Heads of school may involve the designated safeguarding leads.

In the case of a student, they should report any issues in the first instance to their class teacher.

Parents/Visitors are urged to contact the Principal via email principal@europaschool.uk

In the event that any allegations concern the staff in the reporting chain, then any concerns should be reported to the Principal, principal@europaschool.uk. In the case of the Principal or governing body, the concerns should be reported to the clerk of governors via the school reception.

All concerns/ reports will be treated sensitively and confidentially. Complaints will be dealt with according to our complaints policy which is available on the school's website.

The school wants to be open and transparent about any concerns raised by all stakeholders and encourage and enable them to raise serious concerns **within** the school rather than overlooking a problem or "blowing the whistle" outside. Social media is a channel for whistleblowing which the school wants to avoid by actively being open by listening to and acting on concerns quickly. If a stakeholder wants to raise a concern about the organisation, they should immediately contact the clerk to the chair of governors via the school reception. The school's whistleblowing policy is available on the school's website.

Appendix 1: Facebook cheat sheet for staff

Don't accept friend requests from pupils on social media

10 rules for school staff on Facebook

1. Change your display name – use your first and middle name, use a maiden name, or put your surname backwards instead
 2. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, ensure that the image is professional
 3. Check your privacy settings regularly
 4. Be careful about tagging other staff members in images or posts
 5. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be just as happy showing your pupils
 6. Don't use social media sites during school hours
 7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, our school or your pupils online – once it's out there, it's out there
 8. Don't associate yourself with the school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)
 9. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts. Anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile number) is able to find you using this information
 10. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone. The app recognises wifi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same wifi connection (such as parents or pupils)
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Check your privacy settings

- Change the visibility of your posts and photos to **'Friends only'**, rather than 'Friends of friends'. Otherwise, pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they're friends with anybody on your contacts list
- Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos** – go to bit.ly/2MdQXMN to find out how to limit the visibility of previous posts
- The public may still be able to see posts you've **'liked'**, even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster
- **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public
- Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people can't **search for you by name** – go to bit.ly/2zMdVht to find out how to do this

- Remember that **some information is always public**; your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender

What to do if...

A pupil adds you on social media

- In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile
- Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture
- If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents. If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages
- Notify the senior leadership team or the headteacher about what's happening

A parent adds you on social media

- It is at your discretion whether to respond. Bear in mind that:
 - Responding to one parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other teachers at the school
 - Pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in
- If you wish to decline the offer or ignore the message, consider drafting a stock response to let the parent know that you're doing so

You're being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

- **Do not** retaliate or respond in any way
- Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred
- Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it
- If the perpetrator is a current pupil or staff member, our mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents
- If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address any reasonable concerns or complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material
- If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a senior leader should consider contacting the police