



# **HILBRE HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COLLEGE**

## **SOCIAL MEDIA/ MOBILE DEVICES POLICY**

Author:  
Name of Committee approved:  
Date ratified at Full Governors:  
Date to be reviewed:

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Pastoral  
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow users to interact with one another. Examples of this are rediscovering friends on social networking sites, such as *Facebook*, keeping up with other people's lives on *Twitter* or maintaining pages on internet information areas such as *Wikipedia*.
- 1.2 While recognising the benefits of these social media sites for new opportunities for communication, this policy sets out the principles that Hilbre High School Humanities College staff are expected to follow when using them.
- 1.3 The principles set out in this policy are designed to ensure that all staff use social media responsibly so that confidentiality of staff and students and the reputation of the school are safeguarded.
- 1.4 Staff members at Hilbre High School Humanities College must be conscious at all times of the need to keep their personal and professional lives separate.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to Hilbre High School Governing Body, all teaching and other staff employed by the school, all teacher trainees, volunteers and other individuals who work for or provide services on behalf of the school. These individuals will be collectively referred to as "staff members" in this policy.
- 2.2 This policy covers personal use of social media as well as the use of social media for official school purposes.
- 2.3 This policy applies to personal webspace, such as social networking sites (for example *Facebook*, *Snapchat*, *Instagram* and *YouTube*), blogs and microblogs such as *Twitter*, chatrooms, forums, podcasts and open access encyclopaedias, such as *Wikipedia*. The internet is a fast moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media-the principles of this policy must be followed irrespective of the medium.

## 3. Legal framework

- 3.1 Hilbre High School Humanities College is committed to ensuring that all staff members practice confidentially to meet the highest standards. All individuals working within or on behalf of the school are bound by a legal duty of confidence and other laws to protect the confidential information they have access to during the course of their work. Disclosure of confidential information on social media is likely to be a breach of a number of laws and professional codes of conduct, including:
  - The Human Rights Act 1998;
  - Common law duty of confidentiality, and
  - GDPR 2018
- 3.2 Confidential information includes, but is not limited to:
  - Personal-identifiable information, e.g. student and employee records protected by the GDPR 2018;
  - Information divulged in the expectation of confidentiality;
  - School records containing sensitive material;

- Commercially sensitive information, such as information relating to commercial proposals or current negotiations, and
- Politically sensitive information.

3.3 Staff members should also be aware that other laws relating to libel, defamation, harassment and copyright may apply to information posted on social media, including:

- Libel Act 1843
- Defamation Acts 1952 and 1996
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- Malicious Communications Act 1998
- Communications Act 2003, and
- Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988

3.4 Hilbre High School Humanities College could be held vicariously responsible for the acts of its staff members in the course of their employment. For example, staff members who harass co-workers online or who engage in cyberbullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, etc. or who defame a third party whilst at work may render Hilbre High School liable to the injured party.

#### 4. Related policies

4.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy;
- Anti-Bullying policy, and
- Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct policy.

#### 5. Policy principles - *be Professional, Responsible and Respectful*

5.1 You must be conscious at all times of the need to keep your personal and private lives separate. You should never put yourself in a position where there is conflict between your work for the school and your personal interests.

5.2 You must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Hilbre High School into disrepute.

5.3 You must not represent your personal views as those of Hilbre High School on any social media.

5.4 You must not discuss personal information about students, staff and other professionals you interact with as part of your role at Hilbre High School on social media.

5.5 You must not use social media and the internet in any way to attack, insult, abuse or defame students, their family members, colleagues, other professionals, other organisations, or the school.

5.6 You must be accurate, fair and transparent when creating or altering online sources of information on behalf of Hilbre High School.

## 6. Staff member's personal use of social media

- 6.1 Staff members must not identify themselves as employees of Hilbre High School or service providers for the school on their personal webspace. This is to prevent information from these sites being linked with the school and to safeguard the privacy of all staff members.
- 6.2 Staff members must not have contact through any personal social medium with any student, whether from Hilbre High School, including any student who has previously attended the school, unless the students are family members.
- 6.3 The school does not expect staff members to discontinue contact with their family members via social media once the school starts providing services for them. However, any information staff members gain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain nor be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.
- 6.4 Staff members must not have any contact with student's family members through personal social media.
- 6.5 Staff members must decline "friend requests" from students they receive through social media.
- 6.6 On leaving the schools employment, staff members must not contact students by means of personal social media sites. Similarly, staff members must not contact students from their former schools by means of personal social media.
- 6.7 Information staff members have access to as part of their employment, including personal information about students and their family members or colleagues, must not be discussed on their personal webspace.
- 6.8 Photographs, videos or any other types of images of students and their families or images depicting staff members wearing school uniforms or clothing with school logos or images identifying school premises must not be published on personal webspace.
- 6.9 School and other official contact details must not be used for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through social media.
- 6.10 Staff members must not edit open access online encyclopaedias such as *Wikipedia* in a personal capacity whilst in school. This is because the source of the correction will be recorded as the schools IP address and the intervention will, therefore, appear as it has come from the school itself.
- 6.11 Hilbre High School corporate, service or logos must not be used or published on personal webspace.
- 6.12 Access to social media sites for personal reasons is not allowed and staff members should not use their mobile phones between working hours to access social media sites. Staff members are expected to devote their contracted hours of work to their professional duties, personal use of the internet should not be used on school time.
- 6.13 Staff members are strongly advised to ensure that they have the privacy levels of their private sites as high as possible. Staff members should opt out of public listing on social networking sites to protect their own privacy. Staff members should keep their passwords confidential, change them often and be vigilant about what they post online;

it is not safe to reveal home addresses, telephone numbers and other personal information. It is good practice to have a separate e-mail address just for social networking so other contact details are not given away.

- 6.14 Staff members must ensure that any intimate body art (tattoos/piercings) are not displayed on the profile page of their social media site. This is to safeguard the staff member.
- 6.15 Staff members should read the non-statutory advice from the Department for Education for Cyberbullying for advice on internet usage. This document can be found in the same location as this policy on the school website. Useful links for safe internet usage can be found on page 5 of this document.
- 6.16 If further advice is needed during school time, please contact Dave White or Jane Whisker, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) via phone on 0151 625 5996 (ext. 269 or 206) or 07342 075133 (safeguarding phone) or via e-mail at whited@hilbre.wirral.sch.uk or whiskerj@hilbre.wirral.sch.uk
- 6.17 If further advice is needed out of school hours please contact Dave White, DSL via 07342 075133 (safeguarding phone) or via e-mail at whited@hilbre.wirral.sch.uk

## **7. Staff mobile device guidance**

- 7.1 In regards to the use of mobile phones and other similar devices, staff should adhere to guidance given below in this policy and in-conjunction with the relevant section in the Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct policy.
- 7.2 Personal mobiles devices should never be used during lesson times or in the presence of the student body. When on a school trip, staff should use their professional judgement when it is deemed appropriate to use such devices.
- 7.3 Staff should never share their personal phone numbers with students. The only numbers that may be given out are the school safeguarding number and the school mobile, which is sometimes taken out by staff on trips.
- 7.4 Staff should never use their personal devices to take photographs of students (unless there are extenuating circumstances)
- 7.5 Staff should never upload photographs of students from their own personal social media accounts. If a photograph does mistakenly appear on a personal social media account, it must be deleted immediately.
- 7.6 Staff must take responsibility for the safeguarding of their own property (including mobile phones) whilst on the school site.

## **8. Monitoring of internet use**

- 8.1 Hilbre High School constantly monitors usage of its internet and e-mail services without prior notification or authorisation through “Smoothwall” software. A weekly report is generated and sent to the school DSL.
- 8.2 Internet searches undertaken by students and staff members within the school cyberspace are monitored under government guidance and a weekly report is sent to the DSL for audit.

8.3 Users of Hilbre High School e-mail and internet services should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, send or receive using the school's ICT system.

**9. Breaches of the policy**

9.1 Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member(s) in line with Hilbre High School's Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct policy.

9.2 A breach of this policy leading to breaches of confidentiality, or defamation or damage to the reputation of Hilbre High School or any illegal acts or acts that render the school liable to third parties, may result in disciplinary action.